







**VOICES OF INDIAN  
FREEDOM MOVEMENT**





# **VOICES OF INDIAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT**

**VOLUME V**

*Part One*

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## PREFACE

The history of the Indian freedom movement is virtually an account of the role of the Indian National Congress. It presents a fascinating description of the flow of events after events signifying perceptible changes in the character of the national organisation. From a small band of 'loyalists to the Raj', it became a massive organisation of nationalists demanding nothing short of complete independence. The constitutional struggle for self-rule within the Empire eventually became the struggle for 'swaraj within the Empire if possible and without it if necessary' and it ultimately culminated into a struggle for *purna swaraj* by all peaceful and legitimate means. However, the uniqueness of the whole process should be traced in the fact that at no stage the leaders of this organisation espoused the use of unconstitutional methods, though one could define the techniques of *ahimsa* and *satyagraha* as extra-constitutional, not anti-constitutional, devices.

The phase of the first thirty years of the Indian National Congress is often described as the era of 'moderatism' for the obvious reason that the Congress carefully and deliberately pursued the path shown by the Founder (A.O. Hume) and his loyal followers like Pherozeshah Mehta, Dadabhai Naoroji and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. The extremist leaders like B.G. Tilak, B.C. Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai sought to transform the character of the national organisation without ever thinking in terms of converting it into a militant organisation frankly advocating the use of violent means. Their motives and actions were certainly misunderstood by the 'moderates' who scrupulously and obdurately sought to display their firm and unstinted loyalty to the Raj so as to retain the confidence of their English patrons.

A proper study of the subject of India's freedom movement covers all what prominent Indian figures thought and did for

the great cause ; it also covers important reactions and pronouncements of the British leaders and 'observers'. As such, I have put the matter in two parts. While Part I contains commentary on the proceedings of the Indian National Congress from its inception in 1885 till the outbreak of the first World War in 1914, Part II has some important readings representing the British point of view. The noteworthy point is that our national leaders spoke in different 'voices' and so I have sought to include their views in different volumes with a view to maintain, as far as possible, the unity of a particular trend. The way the Indian National Congress conducted itself shows its espousal of a progressive and constructive nationalism. Moreover, as the character of the national organisation underwent important changes from time to time, I have divided the whole account into three parts. In this part I have covered the trend of constitutional struggle for freedom identifiable with self-rule within the British Empire. That five sessions of the Indian National Congress were presided over by Englishmen and words of great appreciation were often said about the role of great English leaders bear eloquent testimony to the fact that, during this phase, the Indian National Congress did not espouse the case of swaraj as it came to be understood and espoused in the years to come.

I hope that my scheme would receive the appreciation of my readers who would find here much for the purpose of their advanced study or research in this important field of modern Indian history and politics. I have drawn material from numerous sources, Indian and foreign, according to my scheme and I offer my sincere gratitude to all of them. I am thankful to a large number of my friends for the help they extended to me in the completion of this project. In particular, I am grateful to my Publishers who appreciated this project and took pains to bring out the volumes in a record time.

—J.C. Johari

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## **PART I**

# **INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS—THE ORGANISED FORM OF INDIAN NATIONALISM**

## **TARANA-I-HINDI**

*Sare jahan se achcha Hindostan hamara,  
Hum bulbulen hain iski, yeh gulsitan hamara.  
Mazhab nahin sikhata apas mein bair rakhna,  
Hindi hain, hum watan hain, Hindostan hamara.*

**(English Version)**

**Our India is the best of all lands in the world,  
We are its nightingales and it is our rose garden,  
Religion does not teach mutual enmity,  
We are Indians, we are natives, this is our India.**

**—Muhammed Iqbal**

## **GENESIS AND BIRTH OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS**

With the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885, Indian freedom movement took an organised form. And since an Englishman, Allan Octavian Hume, played a very important part in the creation of this national organisation, he is rightly regarded as its 'father'. However, it would be simplistic to assume that his instrumental role was the solitary factor behind the genesis and birth of the great national organisation of our country. As a matter, it happened like the culmination of a trend that had started in the wake of the nineteenth century. The message of the social and religious reformers had its definite effect on the rising aspirations of the enlightened section of the Indian people as a result of which demands were put forth for reforms in various spheres of administration. The conditions of the post-Mutiny era procreated and intensified the feelings of nationalism. A student of modern Indian history having a detached point of view cannot ignore the fact that in later part of the last century India was not at all lacking in the essentials of nationalism, nor would he accept the partisan view of some English writers that in the face of the vastness and diversity of this country the possibility of the emergence of a united nation could be ruled out. Dadabhai Naoroji of Bombay, Surendranath Banerjea of Calcutta and Syed Ahmed Khan of Aligarh became all-India figures. They threw light on the prevailing conditions of exploitation and injustice and realised the necessity of making regional and provincial organisations. It was the network of these inter-regional bodies that provided ground for the creation of the Indian National Congress. Due

credit should, however, be given to the British rule that effected political unification of the country. It established a steel-frame which "held the injured body of India together till the gradual process of internal growth had joined the dislocated bones, knit up the torn fibres, and enabled the patient to regain inner coherence and unity".<sup>1</sup>

**PETITION OF THE BOMBAY ASSOCIATION  
AND OTHERS (MAY, 1853)**

To

The Honourable the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament Assembled.

The Humble Petition of the Members of the  
Bombay Association and other Native  
Inhabitants of the Presidency of Bombay.

Shervith,

1. That your petitioners have watched with much anxiety and interest the proceedings of your H'onable House and its Committee on the subject of Indian affairs as bearing on the Legislation about to be proposed for the future Government of India.

2. The report of your Committee which sat during the session 1852 having reached India has been examined and analyzed by your petitioners with much care and they observe that the members of that Committee have been so far satisfied by the evidence upto that time laid before them that they direct the attention of your Honourable House to the favourable tenor of the evidence with respect to the operation of Act 3rd and 4th William IV Chapt. 85, so far as regards the administrations of the Government of India by the East India Company as trustees under the Control of the Crown.

3. The witnesses examined before the Committee of both Houses of Parliament amounted in all to twenty five persons,

1. Edwyn Bevan : *Indian Nationalism*, pp. 45-46.

five of these having been examined before both the Committees. They consisted of Lords Ellenborough, Elphinstone, Hardings, Sir T.H. Maddock, Sir G.R. Clerk and Sir George Pollock, Messrs. Bird, Willoghbhy, Reid, Millet, Melvill, Comondore, Robertson, Colones Sykes, Taylor and Alexander and Capt. MacGregor.

4. The whole of these Gentlemen excepting the three noblemen above mentioned and Capt. MacGregor have been more than thirty and some of them forty years in the service of the East India Company and without desiring to cast the slightest disparagement on their testimony, still it must be borne in mind that they are all to a great degree in the position of interested witnesses speaking indirectly to the favourable results of their own services or at least of a system in which they have all borne a part. The majority of these gentlemen having spent the greater portion of their lives under the existing Government and having freely participated in the advantages enjoyed by the covenanted service of the East India Co., have naturally become prepossessed, in favour of things as they are and although upon a general view of the subject the Administration of the Indian Government may present to your House results very favourable to the Honourable..... of those to whom it has been confided by the Crown of England ; still this conclusion leaves wholly untouched the important question whether the main provisions of an enactment passed in the year 1834 investing the rulers of India with powers almost irresponsible and despotic and instituted as it truly was "An act of effecting an arrangement with the East India Company". Constitute the Best Scheme or all that is needed for the good Government of these vest Territories, all that the Governed can justly demand or should be reasonably satisfied with in 1854.

5. Your petitioners may well leave in the hands of your honourable House without observation from them the Construction of the House portion of the Indian Government only asking that it may be so framed as naturally and easily at all

times to secure within it the services of the ablest and most experienced persons, in Indian affairs ; that it may be so simplified that the people of India may know who really are their Rulers, and who are responsible for measures of Great importance emanating from England but with respect to the constitution of the local Government. Your petitioners earnestly pray your Honourable House not to continue them as they exist without a further and more searching investigation into the actual and daily operation of the existing system than your Honourable House now has or is likely to have before you, if the enquiries are to be so very general in their nature as they seem hitherto to have been and are to be confined to the evidence of retired Indian official personages.

6. Your petitions rejoice to learn that an interest and a spirit of inquiry respecting Indian affairs have lately arisen in England, which have led to a mass of valuable information being placed before the Public, of a nature that would never have reached your Honourable House from official lips, but which nevertheless, your petitioners would respectfully remark deserves the utmost attention of your Honourable House, though it may form no part of evidence, collected by the Committee of your Honourable House and may not be adverted to in their reports. Your petitioners may refer to many valuable reports published by highly competent persons now in England very antagonistic to the interests of the East India Company, whose names therefore your petitioners do not find amongst the persons summoned before the Committee to give evidence on Indian affairs and thereby also to attract the attention of your Honourable House to a very valuable and instructive work recently published at Madras on the administration of justice in that Presidency by George Bruce Norton, Bar at-Law. As this gentleman is now at Madras and cannot be examined in England, your petitioners have taken the liberty of annexing a copy of this work to their petition in the hope, that your Honourable House will allow them in this form, the benefit of that gentleman's testimony to the character of administration of justice in Southern India, testimony which

however startling is nevertheless unimpeachable, being based on the decisions of the courts themselves ; and your petitioners regret to add that Courts of the East India Company in this Presidency are on no better footing as regards judicial fitness and capacity than those of Madras.

7. Your petitioners are sensible that many of the evils which have hitherto retarded progress in India can only be remedied through the medium of efficient and properly constituted local Governments and they look with confidence to your Honourable House giving this head of inquiry the fullest consideration.

8. Your Petitioners, speaking of the Government of their own Presidency, though they believe the remark to be equally true of the other Indian Governments, are of opinion that it is quite unequal to the efficient discharge of its duties and that nothing but the impenetrable veil of secrecy with which even its most trivial acts are covered protects it from Universal condemnation.

9. It consists of a Governor, a Commander-in-chief and two Civil servants as members of the Council. The business is conducted primarily by four secretaries and two Deputy Secretaries, each Secretary having a separate department of his own and being in that the adviser of the Governor. The latter, who generally speaking is without local knowledge or experience is obviously in the hands of Secretaries, and for the most part from the mass of business to be despatched compelled to adopt the minutes they place before him.

10. The Commander-in-chief having the affairs of the Army to attend to or not caring to trouble himself with Civil affairs of the Presidency, with which he cannot be expected to be in the least degree acquainted, spends more than half his time away from the seat of Government and enters the Council apparently merely to record his assent to the minutes of the Governor. It has been stated in evidence before the Committee of your Honourable House that it often happens that



eight or ten boxes full of papers on Revenue and judicial matters are sent to the Commander-in-chief at one time and they have been returned from his house to the other members of the Government perhaps within one hour, allowing merely time for him to put his initials ; and your petitioners believe that it ever has been the case that the Commanders-in-chief though knowing nothing of the subjects in hand felt it their duty invariably to vote with the Governors.

11. The Civil members of Council are not selected from the most able and distinguished of the servants of Government though there have been some remarkable exceptions. The appointment is in the gift of the Court of Directors and is always bestowed on some one of the Senior members of service about to close their Indian career. It is consequently canvassed for in Leaden Hall Street and falls to the lot of him, who can command the greatest amount of personal interest with the members of the court individually. A vacancy occurring but rarely few members of the Civil service can fill the appointment and its gift is thus a matter of favour. They have no specific duties to discharge and little or no responsibility and as things may always be outvoted by the Governor and Commander-in-chief they can scarcely be expected to take any prominent part in current affairs of Government or induced to give any very effective assistance, unless something out of the usual routine or within the time of their past experience should arise to excite their interest. The evil tendency of their position is that having no defined duty, on part of the Government their own brief minutes or their signatures often put for the sake of the conformity to those of others, carry with them a weight to higher authority which should only attach to opinions deliberately formed and the result of careful enquiry made under official responsibility. The practical effect of a Government so constituted is that for the most part each secretary in his own Department is the Governor in council. The Secretaries with one exception selected from Civil Service and generally though not invariably from its most able members, having passed their lives from boyhood on some one or more

of the subordinate agencies of Government are suddenly called upon to discharge the most onerous and important duties for many of which their previous training does not at all qualify them. Questions requiring for their solution a correct knowledge of the principles of finance, of political Economy, of the systems of the country and of other countries, involving the rights and just expectations of classes of persons, and the cases and privileges of individuals with lighter matters crowd in rapid succession on them and must be disposed of and however able and conscientious they may be, they have not the time to go through with due care and attention nor very frequently with the knowledge of the subject requisite to enable them properly to despatch the multifarious matters with which they are loaded ; Government being thus undernamed is necessarily compelled to throw off as much of its own duties as possible, on local offices to act on their report as unimpeachable and to shroud them in secrecy.

The European local officers on the other hand scattered over the country at great distance from one another and having large districts to attend to far beyond their powers of superiors and dependent to a very degree on their subordinates are compelled to dispose of the greater part of their business in a very imperfect manner and their statements to Government—whether emanating from persons who it is known may be trusted or from those in whose accuracy Government are aware no confidence can be placed, are no system accepted as equally trustworthy and the official vindication of the acts of Government founded thereon. The necessary result of this system is that Government is one of first impressions (institutions ?) that short handed as it is under the present system, its chief difficulty and its main object is to keep down and despatch business, to despatch it well if possible ; but at all events to prevent it accumulating ; that hasty superficial reports of local officers, are, in regulating the conduct of Government except on questions of money of equal weight with those which are the result of care and reflection. It is obviously necessary therefore to protect the acts of such Government from public scrutiny and

supervision in order to preserve for it public respect and the most rigid secrecy is consequently preserved in every department. So strictly is this enforced that the members of the Civil Service are all under solemn Oaths not to reveal anything connected with business before them and the Court of Directors have in modern days noticed with severe disapprobation the publication of a very small portion of one of their despatches by, as it was supposed, a member of the Civil Service relating to a suit at Law with which he had been connected Judicially. The same amount of secrecy is preserved in everything that comes before Government—Whether it relates to a purely municipal matter—The establishment of a Sailors' Home, Principality—or hardship practised towards the individual and even where wrong or injury are complained of by a large class of persons or where merely private property is at stake or the character and prospect of an individual are involved—still the same system prevails. If the parties against whom unfavourable reports have been transmitted by the local officers apply for copies, they are always refused. Not the slightest opportunity is afforded them of correcting any mis-statements that may have been made in these reports and there consequently is and naturally ever must be a great inducement to resort to unfair means to procure that information from the records of Government which cannot be fairly obtained but which all the parties concerned are justly entitled and which on system merely is withheld from them. The inevitable effect of this system is the individual cases occupying a large portion of the time of Government. The most cruel injustice, even with the best intention is done. The individual concerned may have had a volume written against him behind his back—written with all the easy confidence of those, who know that their statements will not be handed over to the party interested to reply to ; and when the Presidency Authorities consider matters sufficiently ripe a few paras disclosing a small fragment of the case, recorded against him—a title only of what he ought to be allowed to answer and explain—is sent to him for such observation as he may desire to offer and on his reply to these he is adjudged. It is difficult to exaggerate or on any more

general view fully to display the viscious operation of this system of Government but it will be obvious to your Honourable house that as a system it is the very worst that could be devised and the very last which good sense would indicate as adapted to strengthen British Rule in India by giving it a hold on the affection of the people. On the contrary, its obvious tendency is to engender and perpetuate amongst the young servants of Government an illiterate and despotic tone to give full scope to the prejudice, the ignorance and the self-sufficiency of all, to discourage progress, to discountenance all schemes of improvement emanating from independent and disinterested sources and not within the view of the officer to whose department they are referred, and to cramp all agriculture or commercial energy, all individual enterprise.

12. Your petitioners therefore humbly entreat at your Honourable House in any new legislative which may be framed for India to abolish Councils as at present constituted and in the place to create an useful and efficient council of which the judges of the Supreme Court in legislative matters and some of the European and native citizens should form a part. Also to put an end to that injurious system of secrecy which at present is the ruling principle of vice in Indian administration and to allow the council to call for the proceedings of Government and its local officers, except in cases in which the executive shall declare that State Policy requires secrecy to be preserved. Your petitioners further ask, that in questions of great importance to individuals and classes of persons coming up for the decision of Government, the valuable privilege of being heard by Council be conceded to those who may be desirous of availing themselves of it in support of their interest. With these measures your Petitioners believe that it would be absolutely necessary to strengthen the hands of the Executive Government and that it would be highly desirable that there should always be among the more prominent members some persons trained and experienced in the public offices of England, who can bring to the consideration of Public affairs a more extended knowledge and wider views than are to be

expected from these European gentlemen who have passed all their days from boyhood in the bad system of the country and know no other by which to compare and improve them.

13. Your petitioners forbear to trouble your Honourable House with the details of such a change which are of easy construction if its propriety be once acknowledged, and they equally wish to avoid repeating what they have put forth in their former memorial already, as they believe, referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs but they are anxious to recall the attention of your Honourable House to that narrow and injurious system which gives to those educated at Haileybury College a parliamentary right to supply the vacancies in the Civil Establishment of India. Your Petitioners believe that the existence of this exclusive service, bound together like members of one family—is incompatible with a more open council and an efficient and responsible discharge of public duties. At present Natives of this country however respectable, trustworthy and qualified they may be, are excluded from the higher grade of judicial and revenue situations and from the regular Medical service to which covenanted European Servants sent out from England are alone appointed. Such exclusion being impolitic, unjust and contrary to the letter and spirit of the 87th sec. of the Charter Act 1834 your petitioners respectfully reiterate their prayer that the invidious and unjustifiable distinction between the covenanted and uncovenanted services, which excludes the natives from the higher offices, be abolished and that Natives of India may be allowed to fill all situations for which they may be qualified. By the adoption and practical operation of such a measure a great stimulus will, your petitioners feel convinced, be given to the cause of education and improvement in this country. A great deal of discontent will be removed and inefficiency will be obviated. It is placed beyond controversy by the Testimony of official reports published by the local Governments, that the Grant Medical College at Bombay and the Medical College at Calcutta have recently produced as proficient and competent Native Surgeons and Physicians as those sent out from England under

**"Covenants".** Instead of admitting any of the successful candidates into the regular Medical Service of Government a new and distinct Service has been created for them by the Indian Government, the rank and emoluments of which are considerably inferior, a course which is calculated to lower this new Medical service in the estimation of the Public and to perpetuate the distinction that has hitherto been preserved between Native and European agency or uncovenanted and covenanted servants of Government. So rigidly is the line of separation preserved, that a Native of Indian named Dr. Chukerburty who recently left Calcutta to finish his Medical Education in England, where he greatly distinguished himself and obtained the highest testimonials of proficiency, although recommended for an appointment, as an Assistant Surgeon in the East India Company's Medical Service by the Honourable Sir Edward Ryan and Mr. Cameron, gentlemen of eminent consideration for their past services, was, your petitioners are informed, refused admission into the covenanted Medical Service by the court of directors collectively and individually.

14. Your petitioners cannot take leave to this important subject without requesting the favourable attention of Parliament to the suggestion made in their former petition with regard to the advisability of establishing University or College as proposed by that able and experienced servant of Government Mr. Cameron for the purpose of qualifying the Natives for Government employ, of imparting profound and thorough Judicial knowledge to Native candidates for the Bench and of training up a superior and independent class of vakils, or pleaders who would elevate the character of the Native Bar and be of great service in the efficient administration of Justice in this country.

15. Your petitioners would further ask that as regards the European servants of Government a distinction commencing in England and preserved through may be made between those who are destined to fill judicial offices in India and the Executive Officers of the Government and that the former may

be withdrawn from the operation of personal favour and individual patronage and be selected like the judges in England for their own merit and acquirements.

16. Your petitioners believe that if whilst opening the highest judicial offices to the Natives of this country and fairly apportioning them between qualified Natives and their European fellow subjects, the offices of Zillah Judge were thrown open to gentlemen of Legal Education. If no one were permitted to leave England for this purpose until twenty-six years of age, if a public committee composed of four members named by the four Inns of Court and two member by the Home Government were appointed half yearly to examine the candidates, selecting from them so many only as according to the computed vacancies were then required, if the course of Examination besides comprehending a knowledge of selected portions of English substantive Law, the general principles of jurisprudence, procedure, the law and the constitution of India and its modern History, a class of most able public servants to fill the office of Zillah Judge and the higher grade would be selected and that a certain probation in India ending with an examination of the candidates into Native Languages in Hindu and Mahomedan code. The local regulations, the tenures and customs of the country would complete an education and produce an efficiency which under the Court of Justice a blessing to the country that would be heartily and gratefully acknowledged through the length and breadth of land and Appellate Courts so constituted would ensure to the English Government the firmest hold on the affections and interest of the people.

17. Your petitioners in their former memorial drew the attention of your H'onable House to the correspondence between the Board of Control and the Directors of the East India Co. contained in 17th volume of the "papers respecting the negotiations with H.M.S. ministers on the subject of East India Co's charter and although well aware from that correspondence that they may justly ask your Hon'able House, to

discontinue the practice of periodically legislating for India, a practice exclusively connected with rights and privileges of the East India Co. put an end to by the arrangements made with them in 1833. Still your petitioners not foreseeing the chance of arousing the interest and attention now bestowed on Indian affairs, petitioned your H'onable House to limit the period of existence of any future government of India to ten years, but your petitioners are now emboldened to ask your Hon'able House not to debar them for any period of years from requesting a revision of what may be injurious in the coming India's Legislation—not to make them exception to all British subjects in the distant Colonies of the British Empire, who have all along been in the enjoyment of the privilege of approaching Parliament whenever the affairs of the colony have required Imperial preference. It is simply necessary, Lord Brocylotn declared in his speech in the House of Lords of 1st March last, to pass an Act providing for the best form of Government both in England and in India, without limiting its duration to any number of years, an act which like any other Statute might be modified, altered or repealed as occasion might require. And carrying out the same principle still further, your petitioners would respectfully observe that it cannot be necessary to embrace all the subjects involved in the discussion of Indian Affairs in one Act, and that the Constitution of the Home Government. The Constitution and powers of the several local Governments, the construction of a new Judicial Service and each independent Branch of enquiry if made the subject of separate Legislation would in all probability receive more careful attention and be more satisfactorily disposed off than if the entire mass of Indian information be gathered together in one and thrown into a single enactment.

18. Your petitioners, therefore, humbly pray your Hon'ble House, that this petition may be referred to the Committee now sitting on Indian Affairs with a direction to them to have regards to its contents on any measures of Legislation which the committee may propose to Parliament and that your H'onable House will be pleased if necessary to cause commis-



sions to issue to disinterested and independent persons at the three Presidencies—to collect evidence on India as to the practical working of the systems of Government in operation and that such Committees may be authorised to examine all Government servants of whatever Rank and to require the production of any of the records of Government connected with State Policy calculated to throw light on the subject of enquiry.

And your Petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

### **THE POONA SARVAJANIK SABHA (1870)\***

In 1867 an association called 'the Poona Association' had been started in Poona with the object of serving as an intermediary between the Government and the people. The prime movers of this Association were gentlemen of light and leading, some of whom, as the late Messrs. Kashinath Parsharam Gadgil, Kashinath Govind Natu, and Kashinath Balkrishna Marathe, are remembered even to this day. During the four years of its existence it held several meetings in order to enlighten the public upon the burning topics of the day. But it was eventually merged into the Sarvajanik Sabha. The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha was founded on the New year's day viz. 1st of Chaitra of the Shaka year 1792, corresponding to 2nd April 1870. On that auspicious day Shrimant Shrinivasrao Pant Pratinidhi, chief of Aundh, stood up in the assembly of 95 in number who were elected by over 6,000 persons, representing all castes, creeds, and interests and explained to them the object of convening the meeting.

Modern democratic ideas had just begun to make their appearance in the country and surprisingly enough the Sarvajanik Sabha, at its very inception had introduced the elective principle in its constitution.

\*From *Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. I, published by the Government of Bombay, 1957, pp. 150-52.

Great care was taken from the beginning to make the Sabha an elected body. The formation of the Sabha on an elective basis clearly shows that the principle of election is almost engrained in the Indian mind and is not a plant of foreign growth.

The first president of the Sabha was the Chief of Aundh and one of its first Secretaries was the famous Sarvajanic Kaka (Ganesh Vasudeo Joshi) who was the chief moving spirit and the real organiser of the body. Justice Ranade after he came to Poona in 1872 became the main guide and source of inspiration for all the intellectual activity of the institute.

The Sabha started without any funds at the beginning. But steps were soon taken to raise funds for the purposes of the Sabha by means of subscriptions, donations, etc., and as years rolled on and the Sabha made its existence felt by its vigorous advocacy of the people's cause, subscriptions and donations flowed in from the rich and poor alike.

The preamble of the constitution lays down :

“Whereas it has been deemed expedient that there should exist between the Government and people some institution in the shape of a mediating body which may afford to the latter facilities for knowing the real intentions and objects of Government, as also adequate means of securing their rights by making timely representations to Government of the real circumstances in which they were placed, an association has been formed and organised under the appellation of Poona Sarvajanic Sabha.”

The real difference between this organisation and the other organisations like the “Bombay Association” which functioned at that time was that the Sarvajanic Sabha used to go to the people and create informed public opinion in support of its demands. It was not a mere memorial making body. The relief measures organised by the Sabha at the time of the famine

in 1878-79 and also the sober agitation conducted by it, compelled Government to accept plans and proposals made by the Sabha.

Unfortunately acute political differences caused a serious split among the leaders of the Sabha in 1895. The moderate element represented by Justice Ranade and Honourable G.K. Gokhale left the institution, the affairs of which passed thereafter under the control of Lokmanya Tilak. After this Government's attitude towards the institution was changed and they declared (1897) that "The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha as at present constituted must cease to be recognised as a body which has any claim to address Government on questions of public policy." In spite of this adverse policy of the Government, the Sabha continued its activities and agitations unabated.

### **WEDDERBURN'S NARRATION\***

#### *The Early Steps taken in 1883 to form a National Organisation*

Towards the close of Lord Lytton's viceroyalty, that is, about 1878 and 1879, Mr. Hume became convinced that some definite action was called for to counteract the growing unrest. From well-wishers in different parts of the country he received warnings of the danger to the Government, and to the future welfare of India, from the economic sufferings of the masses, and the alienation of the intellectuals. But happily the arrival of Lord Ripon revived hope among the people, and produced a lull ; and Mr. Hume postponed definite organization until, by his retirement from the service, he should be free to act, and able to take advantage of the growing improvement in the popular feeling produced by Lord Ripon's benign

\*From Sir William Wedderburn : *Allan Octavian Hume*, pp. 50-57. Wedderburn presided over the Bombay session of the Indian National Congress held in 1889.

presence. Accordingly, the first movement towards a definite scheme is to be found in a circular letter dated 1st March 1883, addressed to the "Graduates of the Calcutta University." The letter opens with these wise and kindly words : "Constituting, as you do, a large body of the most highly educated Indians, you should, in the natural order of things, constitute also the most important source of all mental, moral, social and political progress in India. Whether in the individual or the nation, all vital progress must spring from within, and it is to you, her most cultured and enlightened minds, her most favoured sons, that your country must look for the initiative. In vain may aliens, like myself, love India and her children, as well as the most loving of these ; in vain may they, for her and their good, give time and trouble, money and thought ; in vain may they struggle and sacrifice ; they may assist with advice and suggestions ; they may place their experience, abilities, and knowledge at the disposal of the workers, but they lack the essential of nationality, and the real work must ever be done by the people of the country themselves." Scattered individuals, however capable and however well meaning, are powerless singly. What is needed is union, organization, and well-defined lines of action ; and to secure these an association is required, armed and organized with unusual care, having for its object to promote the mental, moral, social, and political regeneration of the people of India : "Our little army must be *sui generis* in discipline and equipment, and the question simply is, how many of you will prove to possess, in addition to your high scholastic attainments, the unselfishness, moral courage, self-control, and active spirit of benevolence essential in all who should enlist." And then he proposed that a commencement should be made with a body of fifty "founders," to be the mustard-seed of future growth ; "if only fifty men, good and true, can be found to join as founders, the thing can be established and the further development will be comparatively easy." The details of the organization would have to be decided by the members themselves. But he made suggestions as to the personnel, discipline, and working methods of the association ; and specially he insisted on its constitution being

democratic, and free from personal ambitions : the head should merely be the chief servant, and his council assistant servants. This is the principle followed in later years by Mr. Gokhale in his Servants of India Society ; and it conforms to the precept, "He that is greatest among you, let him be your servant." And this long letter ends with an appeal, which both stirs and stings : "As I said before, you are the salt of the land. And if amongst even you, the elite, fifty men cannot be found with sufficient power of self-sacrifice, sufficient love for and pride in their country, sufficient genuine and unselfish heartfelt patriotism to take the initiative, and if needs be, devote the rest of their lives to the Cause—then there is no hope for India. Her sons must and will remain mere humble and helpless instruments in the hands of foreign rulers for 'they would be free, *themselves* must strike the blow.' And if even the leaders of thought are all either such poor creatures, or so selfishly wedded to personal concerns, that they dare not or will not strike a blow for their country's sake, then justly and rightly are they kept down and trampled on, for they deserve nothing better. Every nation secures precisely as good a government as it merits. If you, the picked men, the most highly educated of the nation, cannot, scorning personal ease and selfish objects, make a resolute struggle to secure greater freedom for yourselves and your country, a more impartial administration, a larger share in the management of your own affairs, then we your friends are wrong, and our adversaries right ; then are Lord Ripon's noble aspirations for your good fruitless and visionary ; then, at present, at any rate, all hopes of progress are at an end, and India truly neither lacks nor deserves any better government than she now enjoys. Only, if this be so, let us hear no more fractious, peevish complaints that you are kept in leading strings, and treated like children, for you will have proved yourselves such. *Men* know how to act. Let there be no more complaints of Englishmen being preferred to you in all important offices, for if you lack that public spirit, that highest form of altruistic devotion that leads men to subordinate private ease to the public weal, that true patriotism that has made Englishmen what they are,—then rightly are

these preferred to you, and rightly and inevitably have they become your rulers. And rulers and taskmasters they must continue, let the yoke gall your shoulders never so sorely, until you realize and stand prepared to act upon the eternal truth that, whether in the case of individuals or nations, self-sacrifice and unselfishness are the only unfailing guides to freedom and happiness."

This appeal—from one trusted and beloved by the Indian people—was not made in vain. The men required as founders to initiate the movement, were forthcoming from all parts of India; and the "Indian National Union" was formed. It was arranged that a Conference should be held at Poona, to enable "all those most interested in this Union to exchange opinions and authoritatively adopt an organization that, in the main, shall approve itself to all." In the meantime a Preliminary Report was issued to members, containing suggestions and conclusions, "the result of the discussion of the subject with all the most eminent and earnest politicians of this Empire." In the first place it is stated that "the Union, so far as it has been constituted, appears to be absolutely unanimous in insisting that unswerving loyalty to the British Crown, shall be the key note of the institution. The Union is prepared when necessary to oppose, by all constitutional methods, all authorities, high or low, here or in England, whose acts or omissions are opposed to those principles of the government of India laid down from time to time by the British Parliament, and endorsed by the British Sovereign, but it holds the continued affiliation of India to Great Britain, at any rate for a period far exceeding the range of any practical political forecast, to be *absolutely essential* to the interests of our own National Development." Amongst the qualifications for membership most commonly insisted on are the following: (1) An unblemished record, public and private; (2) an earnest and unwavering desire to improve the status, either material, mental, moral or political of the People of India; (3) marked natural intelligence, adequately developed by education; (4) a willingness to sink, when occasion demands this sacrifice,

selfish and personal, in altruistic and public considerations ; and (5) independence of character, coupled with sobriety of judgment. Progress had been made in forming local Select Committees, at Kurachee, Ahmedabad, Surat, Bombay, Poona, Madras, Calcutta, Benares, Allahabad, Lucknow, Agra, and Lahore, all of whom had promised to attend the Conference at Poona, either as a whole, or in the person of delegates selected among themselves. And it was proposed that until the formation of a Central Committee, there should be a "General Secretary to the whole Union whose duty it should be, not only to visit personally all the Select Committees from time to time and communicate to them the experiences of the other Select Committees, but also to look after the practical details connected with the Conferences, receive all communications from the several Committees and circulate these to others, and generally supervise the office work of the Union." Naturally, the discharge of these toilsome duties fell to the lot of Mr. Hume himself.

Having thus laid the foundations of a national organization, to voice the aspirations of the Indian people, Mr. Hume proceeded to England, in order to consult with friends there, as to the best means of getting a hearing for these aspirations from the British Parliament and Public. His first visit was to Sir James Caird, at Cassencary in Galloway, and there Mr. John Bright met him, having arranged to do so at considerable personal inconvenience. After prolonged consultation with these wise and faithful friends of India, Mr. Hume went on to Lord Ripon at Studley Royal. Thence he proceeded to Lord Dalhousie at Brechin Castle, Mr. Baxter M.P. at Dundee, Mr. R.T. Reid M.P. at Arrochar, Mr. Slagg M.P. at Manchester, and other influential friends. The result of these interviews was reported to his Indian correspondents in an interesting series of letters, written during September 1885. The first matter for consideration was the supply of Indian news of the British Press. The general public in England rarely read more about India than what is contained in the Reuter telegrams which appear in *The Times* and other leading papers ; and it

had been long the complaint in India that these telegrams have an Anglo-Indian official colouring, and do not do justice to the Indian view of current events and discussions ; on the contrary, they usually present any case of an Indian complaint in terms hostile to Indian wishes. No opportunity existed for correcting misstatements thus published in England ; and the question had assumed additional importance on account of the approaching Conference at Poona, as it was essential that this national organization should not be presented to the British public in an unfair light. Accordingly before leaving Bombay, Mr. Hume arranged for an "Indian Telegraph Union," which was to provide funds to send telegrams on important matters to such leading journals in England and Scotland as would agree to publish them. Mr. Hume undertook to negotiate this matter with the Editors of leading journals, and he later reported that among Provincial papers the following had agreed to receive and publish the Indian Union telegrams : *The Manchester Guardian*, the *Manchester Examiner*, the *Leeds Mercury*, the *Scotsman*, the *Glasgow Daily Mail*, the *Dundee Advertiser*, the *Western Times*, and the *Breadford Observer*. Unfortunately this useful agency was allowed to drop from want of funds. The next question was, how to influence the British Public, and especially Members of Parliament ? On this question all friends were agreed that at the pending General Election, no hearing could be got for detailed Indian grievances. But it was thought that the opportunity might be taken to obtain from candidates a promise to give attention to Indian affairs. This was the shrewd advice given by Mr. Reid, M.P. (now Lord Loreburn), in a letter addressed to Mr. Hume : "I would recommend you," he said, "to secure two or three men, as influential as you can, in as many constituencies as you can, and get them to write to the candidate, exacting no pledge as to the course of policy but a simple pledge to give attention to Indian affairs, and publish the correspondence in the local papers. Every candidate in the three kingdoms would pledge himself to easy an obligation. One in ten would keep the pledge and thus give a nucleus of listeners in an Indian debate. The publication of the correspondence would make them afraid



wholly to neglect business they had so publicly engaged to consider." The resources at the disposal of the informal Committee in England were not sufficient to carry out so large a scheme, but it may be noted that a limited pledge such as Mr. Reid proposed, was the basis of the Indian Parliamentary Committee, which afterwards did good work for many years in the House of Commons. In the same letter Mr. Reid gives Mr. Hume practical advice on two other points, as to coaching British members on Indian subjects ; and as to getting a seat for an Indian in the House of Commons : "You must have coadjutors in Parliament. If you have a few men like yourself busy in England they will find friends inside the House. For there is a real desire in this country to act justly and generously as regards India. But members know nothing. You must have men of honour to inform them of facts. So many impostors and self-seekers are always ready to catch an M.P. to ventilate their grievances, that members are afraid to trust the information given them, and neve act on it (if they respect themselves) unless convinced of the integrity of their informants. Therefore you require high-class men to 'coach' and inform members. If they appear and are in earnest, you will get plenty of help.' For preference, members would listen to a trustworthy Indian ; and if you "succeeded in obtaining a seat for him simply to represent Indian grievances, he would be listened to in the House and would be a real power for good." Besides these definite suggestions, all British friends were agreed that if the cause of India was to make progress among the British people, a vigorous and sustained propaganda must be kept up throughout the country, by means of public meetings, lectures, pamphlets, articles and correspondence in the Press, and by securing the sympathy of local associations and of influential public men. A local British Committee, to act as the guiding and propelling power in this work, was evidently required ; but it was felt that the time had not yet come to reorganize on a permanent basis the informal Committee of sympathizers, who were then attending to Indian interests in England.

**S.N. BANERJEA'S NARRATION\***

**I**

After my return from England in June, 1875, and along with the work of organizing the students and infusing into them a new life and spirit, I began seriously to consider the advisability of forming an Association to represent the views of the educated middle-class community and inspire them with a living interest in public affairs. There was indeed the British Indian Association, which, under the guidance of the great Kristo Das Pal, who was then secretary, valiantly upheld the popular interests when necessary ; but it was essentially and by its creed an Association of land-holders. Nor did an active political agitation, or the creation of public opinion by direct appeals to the people, form a part of its recognized programme. There was thus the clear need for another political Association on a more democratic basis, and the fact was indeed recognized by the leaders of the British Indian Association. For some of its most distinguished members, such as the Maharaja Narendra Krishna, Babu Kristo Das Pal, and others, attended the inaugural meeting of the new Association, and encouraged its formation by their presence. And let me gratefully add here that, throughout, the relations between the new Association and the British Indian were of the most cordial character, and this was due largely to the influence and example of Kristo Das Pal, one of the greatest political leaders that Bengal, or India, has ever produced. Mr. Ananda Mohan Bose and myself joined hands in this matter. I had more leisure than he, but we were in frequent consultation.

Associated with us in our efforts to organize a new Association upon popular lines was a devoted worker, comparatively unknown then, and, I fear, even now, whose memory deserves to be rescued from oblivion. Dwarkanath Ganguli began life as a teacher, and while yet young embraced Brahmoism. In

\*From Sir Surendranath Banerjea : *A Nation in Making*, Chapters 5, 9, 10. Banerjea presided over Congress sessions held at Poona in 1895 and at Ahmedabad in 1902.

the schism that took place between the two wings of the Brahmo-Samaj he sided with the dissentients and actively promoted the establishment of the Sadharan Brahmo-Samaj. An ardent lover of what he believed to be the truth, when he took up a cause he threw his whole soul into it. His co-operation in the organization of the new Association was of great value to us ; and so long as health and strength were spared to him he worked in the cause of the Association with an energy and devotion, the memory of which, now that he is dead, his friends cherish with affectionate gratitude.

After a year's preparation, the Indian Association was established on July 26, 1876. The name was the subject of anxious consideration among our friends. Pundit Iswar Chunder Vidyasagar and Mr. Justice Dwarkanath Mitter, while still a member of the Bar, had formed the idea of organizing a similar Association which was to be the voice and the organ of the middle classes. The idea had to be given up as it did not at the time meet with much support ; but the name they had chosen for their proposed organization was the Bengal Association. We thought that such a name, or anything like it, would restrict the scope of our work. For the idea that was working in our minds was that the Association was to be the centre of an all-India movement. For even then, the conception of a united India, derived from the inspiration of Mazzini, or, at any rate, of bringing all India upon the same common political platform, had taken firm possession of the minds of the Indian leaders in Bengal. We accordingly resolved to call the new political body the Indian Association.

The inaugural meeting was marked by an incident that deserves a passing notice. Babu Kali Churn Banerjee, who, next to the Rev. K.M. Banerjee, was the foremost Indian Christian leader of his generation, and who subsequently became President of the Indian Association, opposed its formation, chiefly on the ground that a similar Association, under the name of the Indian League, had been established a few months before. I replied to his arguments, and the public meeting ratified the resolution creating the Association.

The Indian League did useful work. Babu Sisir Kumar Ghose of *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Dr. Sambhoo Chunder Mookerjee of the *Rais and Rayyat*, and Babu Motilal Ghose, were its moving spirits. It has ceased to exist and some of its leading members have joined the Indian Association....

The Indian Association supplied a real need. It soon focused the public spirit of the middle class, and became the centre of the leading representatives of the educated community of Bengal. Mr. Ananda Mohan Bose was elected Secretary, Babu Akshay Kumar Sirkar, who had since made a name for himself as a Bengalee writer, was appointed Assistant Secretary. I held no office, but I was one of the most active members of the Association. In view of my removal from Government service, I kept myself in the background, but I worked zealously for the Association, knowing no higher pleasure or duty, and bent upon realizing through this institution the great ideals which even at that early period had taken definite possession of my mind. They may be set forth as follows : (1) The creation of a strong body of public opinion in the country ; (2) the unification of the Indian races and peoples upon the basis of common political interests and aspirations ; (3) the promotion of friendly feeling between Hindus and Mohamedans ; and, lastly, the inclusion of the masses in the great public movements of the day. I worked for these ideals ; others have worked for them too, for they were in the air, and the possession and property of every thoughtful and patriotic Indian ; and now, after nearly fifty years of public life, I have the gratification of feeling that, if they have not been wholly realized, they are within a measurable distance of accomplishment. The Indian Association materially helped to promote these ideals. They were the natural and normal development of the efforts of the great men of the past, under the new conditions created by the closer touch of our best minds with the political thought and activities of the West....

Within a year of the foundation of the Indian Association, the first great opportunity presented itself for realizing some of

those great deals that had given birth to the Association. Reactionary rulers are often the creators of great public movements. They will no doubt deny the charge or repudiate the credit ; but they certainly sow the seeds which, in the fullness of time, ensure the enthronement of popular opinion and the triumph of popular causes. The reduction of the maximum limit of age, for the open competitive examination for the Indian Civil Service, from twenty-one to nineteen years, by the orders of the Marquis of Salisbury, then Secretary of State for India, created a painful impression throughout India. It was regarded as a deliberate attempt to blast the prospects of Indian candidates for the Indian Civil Service. The Indian Association resolved upon organizing a national movement. A great public meeting was held at the Town Hall on March 24, 1877. It was presided over by Maharaja Sir Narendra Krishna Bahadur, and was representative of the whole of Bengal. Not only were the leading men of Calcutta present, but also delegates from the interior of the province. Keshub Chunder Sen, who had never in his life taken part in any political meeting, was persuaded to move the election of the President.

The meeting was one of the biggest public demonstrations held in Calcutta ; it was destined to be the forerunner of similar and even more crowded meetings held all over India. The agitation was the means ; the raising of the maximum limit of age for the open competitive examination and the holding of simultaneous examinations were among the ends ; but the underlying conception, and the true aim and purpose, of the Civil Service agitation was the awakening of a spirit of unity and solidarity among the people of India. It was accordingly resolved to appeal to the whole of India and bring the various Indian provinces upon the same common platform (a thing that had never been attempted before), and to unite them through a sense of a common grievance and the inspiration of a common resolve. It was an inspiring ideal, and to me it appealed with overwhelming effect....

## II

On my release from prison, and after my enforced leisure, which, as I have already observed, I greatly enjoyed, owing to the complete rest it gave me, there lay before me heavy public work. I took up the movement for the creation of a National Fund. A great meeting was held on July 17, 1883, attended by over ten thousand people, at which it was resolved to raise a national fund to secure the political advancement of the country by means of constitutional agitation in India and in England. The Contempt Case and the growing movement for Indian unity and solidarity had opened wide our vision, and we invited the other provinces to co-operate with us. The Civil Service agitation had disclosed the essential unity of Indian aims and aspirations, the Contempt Case had accentuated the feeling, and we now began to look beyond our own province, and to seek for strength and invigoration by the moral support and active co-operation of united India. The moral transformation which was to usher in the Congress movement had thus already its birth in the bosom of the Indian National Conference which met in Calcutta, and to which representatives from all parts of India were invited.

The Ilbert Bill controversy helped to identify the growing feeling of unity among the Indian people. The Anglo-Indian community had formed their Defence Association with its branches in different parts of the country. They had raised over a lakh and fifty thousand rupees to protect what they conceived to be their interests, and to assert their special privileges. Their organization and their resources had secured success to their cause. The educated community all over India watched the struggle with interest. There was the Ilbert Bill agitation with all its developments taking place before their eyes. They could not remain insensible to the lesson that it taught, of combination and organization ; a lesson which in this case was enforced amid conditions that left a rankling sense of humiliation in the mind of educated India. It was, however, fruitful of results. It strengthened the forces that were speeding up the

birth of the Congress movement ; and, as I have observed, before the year was out, the first National Conference was held in Calcutta. In its organization I had no inconsiderable share—*quorum pars magna fui*. It was the reply of educated India to the Ilbert Bill agitation, a resonant blast on their golden trumpet. The Conference met for three days, from December 28 to 30.

The questions that even now substantially form the chief planks in the Congress platform were taken up for discussion. They were Representative Councils, or Self-government, Education, general and technical, the separation of Judicial from Executive functions in the administration of Criminal Justice, and, lastly, the wider employment of our countrymen in the public service.

The year 1884 witnessed the departure of Lord Ripon from India, and it was the occasion of popular demonstrations unparalleled in Indian annals. The Anglo-Indian official living in isolation and detachment from the people now began to realize the birth of a national movement, of which he had not the faintest conception. 'If it be real what does it mean ?' exclaimed Sir Auckland Colvin, the Indian Finance Minister, with passionate bewilderment, in a pamphlet of that name which at the time created quite a sensation and was largely read. The demonstrations were a revelation to the bureaucracy ; and they extended from Calcutta to Bombay ; and town after town through which the retiring Viceroy passed vied with the others in displaying its love and gratitude to their benefactor. The vivid and picturesque language of the scriptural text was put into requisition to describe this all-embracing movement. 'The dry bones in the open valley', said Sir Auckland Colvin, 'had become instinct with life.'

Those who had eyes to see, witnessed in these demonstrations the beginnings of a united national life, the birth of a new spirit of co-operation among the Indian people, destined to have a profound influence on their future evolution. It was

not that Lord Ripon had been able to do much ; but the purity of his intentions, the loftiness of his ideals, the righteousness of his policy, and his hatred of racial disqualifications, were an open book to the people of India. They read it and poured out their heart's gratitude to the Englishman who, in the midst of his chilling bureaucratic surroundings, realized the great mission of England in India, and sought to fulfil it, through good report and evil report. In Calcutta we organized a huge demonstration in which I had my part and share. Indeed, in the year preceding we got up a similar demonstration, though it was of an informal character. The evening party at the Belgachia Gardens was attended by crowds of people from the highest to the lowest. Anglo-India saw at that function that the Viceroy whom they had denounced had won the people's love and esteem such as no other Viceroy had ever done before.

Lord Dufferin succeeded Lord Ripon as Viceroy. I had known Lord Dufferin in England. During the days of my troubles, when I had been rejected by the Civil Service Commissioners, he had very kindly sent for me and interested himself in my case. Quite unexpectedly and of his own motion he wrote inviting me to see him, and after a long conversation with me said that he would speak to the Duke of Argyll, who was then Secretary of State, about my case. We were all prepossessed in his favour ; and on his arrival in Calcutta, the Indian Association waited upon him with an address of welcome in which, among other things, the new Viceroy's attention was prominently called to the need of reconstituting and reforming the Provincial Legislative Councils. This address, which, I may add, was drafted by me, was presented on December 24, 1884, a year before the birth of the Indian National Congress. The passage in the address that refers to this subject is worth reproducing. After referring to the recently-conferred boon of local self-government, the address went on to say :

'In this connexion it would not be out of place to observe that the reconstitution of the Provincial Legislative Councils is



one of those reforms which public opinion seems to demand with increasing urgency. This is not the time or the place to enter upon the consideration of so vast a subject. But this may safely be asserted, that the Provincial Legislative Assemblies, as at present constituted, without the right of interpellation or any share in financial management, with their official majorities, for the most part, and the non-official members owing their appointment entirely to nomination, admit of little room for the successful expression of popular opinion, and fail to command that degree of confidence which is so needful for their efficient working. Even in the neighbouring Crown Colony of Ceylon, the Legislative Council is based upon a more popular model.'

### III

In December, 1885, we again held a National Conference, the second of its kind, to the first of which I have referred as having been held in 1883. It was like its predecessor a conference of all-India held upon the same lines. But in the meantime the ideal had made headway. This time the Conference was convened by the three leading Associations of Calcutta—the British Indian, representing the landed interest, the Indian, the Association of the middle classes, and the Central Mohamedan Association, of which Mr. (now the Rt. Hon. Mr.) Ameer Ali was Secretary.

The Conference met for three days, on December 25, 26 and 27, 1885. Now only was Bengal represented, but delegates attended from several towns in Northern India such as Meerut, Benaras and Allahabad. Bombay was represented by the Hon. Mr. Vishnarain Mandlik, the Indian member for that presidency in the Imperial Legislative Council. The Conference voted the urgency of the reform of the Legislative Councils, and appointed a committee to consider what steps should be taken to bring about its satisfactory settlement.

While we were having our National Conference in Calcutta, the Indian National Congress, conceived on the same lines and

having the same programme, was holding its first sittings at Bombay. The movements were simultaneous ; the preliminary arrangements were made independently, neither party knowing what the other was doing until on the eve of the sittings of the Conference and of the Congress, Mr. W.C. Bonnerjea, who presided over the Bombay Congress, invited me to attend it. I told him that it was too late to suspend the Conference, and that as I had a large share in its organization it would not be possible for me to leave Calcutta and attend the Bombay Congress. This and the one at Karachi are the only sittings of the Indian National Congress that I missed over the long period extending from 1885 to 1917, when, for reasons set forth later on, the Moderate Party definitely seceded from the Congress.

It appears that while we were organizing our National Conference at Calcutta, some of our friends headed by the late Mr. Allen Hume had met at Madras for a similar purpose. Mr. Kashinath Trembuck Telang wrote to me from Bombay requesting me to send him some notes about the first National Conference held in 1883. The two Conferences met about the same time, discussed similar views and voiced the same grievances and aspirations. The one that met in Calcutta was called the 'National Conference' and the other, which assembled at Bombay, the 'Indian National Congress'. Henceforth, those who worked with us joined the Congress and heartily co-operated with it.

#### **ANNIE BESANT'S NARRATION\***

In late December in 1884, seventeen men met in Madras, in the house of that stalwart advocate of religion and reform, Dewan Bahadur Raghunath Rao. Nearly all of them had been delegates to the just-ended Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, and the others had been there as friends and sympathisers. But surely this new pride in India's

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\*From Mrs. Annie Besant : *How India Wrought for Freedom*, Chapter I. Mrs. Besant presided over the Calcutta Congress held in 1917.

mighty faiths throbbing in their hearts, this dawning hope of India's greatness in the future to correspond with the greatness of her past, this feeling that the discrowned East is not always to remain a thrall to the younger Western Nations, and that Asia, once the cradle of mighty Empires, shall again stretch out her hands to grasp the sceptre and the imperial ball—these dreams sent out the dreamers to take counsel together, and they resolved, greatly daring, to form themselves into a group of provisional Committees, men from different towns to win others, each in his place, and to meet later for further consultation. Let us place on record their names, for they were the seed of a mighty tree. Norendranath Sen of Calcutta, that sturdiest of fighters, was one of the little group, and he gave their names later in his paper, *The Indian Mirror*; he remarks that "the delegates who attended the Convention were most of them men who, socially and intellectually, are the leaders of the Society in which they move in different parts of the country". They were :

*Madras* : The Hon. Mr. S. Subramania Iyer (subsequently Judge of the High Court, Acting Chief Justice, K.C.I.E., and L.L.D.), and Messrs. P. Rangiah Naidu and P. Ananda Charlu.

*Calcutta* : Messrs. Norendranath Sen, Surendranath Bannerji (the "uncrowned King of Bengal," the great orator, and National leader), and M. Ghosh.

*Bombay* : The Hon. Messrs. V.N. Mandlik and K.T. Telang (later, Judge of the High Court) and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji (the G.O.M. of India).

*Poona* : Messrs. C. Vijiaranga Mudaliar, and Pandurang Gopal.

*Benares* : Sardar Dyal Singh.

*Allahabad* : Mr. Harishchandra.

*N.W.P.* : Mr. Kashi Prasad and Pandit Lakshminarayan.

*Bengal* : Mr. Charuchandra Mitter.

*Oudh* : Mr. Shri Ram.

Seventeen good men and true, who out of their love and their hope conceived the idea of a political National Movement for the saving of the Motherland.

There seems to be no record of the work done in their own towns and provinces on their return home, but the *Proceedings of the First Indian National Congress* tells us that "in March, 1885, it was decided to hold a meeting of Representatives from all parts of India at the then coming Christmas. Poona was considered the most central and therefore suitable place". From this onwards we have the official Reports to guide our steps.

From this meeting the following circular was issued, profoundly interesting now, in 1915, as showing the minds of the Fathers of the Congress in these days of origin, in 1885, just thirty years ago. It shows the first ideas of those who were to be the leaders of the Indian Nation in her struggles to regain her lost liberty, and to become a Self-governing Nation, free amid the Free Communities which form the mighty Empire "on which the Sun never sets".

Here is the circular :

A Conference of the Indian National Union will be held at Poona from the 25th to the 31st December 1885.

The Conference will be composed of Delegates—leading politicians well acquainted with the English language—from all parts of the Bengal, Bombay and Madras Presidencies.

The direct objects of the Conference will be : (1) to enable all the most earnest labourers in the cause of national progress to become personally known to each other ; (2) to discuss and decide upon the political operations to be undertaken during the ensuing year.

Indirectly this Conference will form the germ of a Native Parliament and, if properly conducted, will constitute in a few

years an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is still wholly unfit for any form of representative institutions. The first Conference will decide whether the next shall be again held at Poona, or whether, following the precedent of the British Association, the Conferences shall be held year by year at different important centres.

This year the Conference being in Poona, Mr. Chiplonkar and others of the Sarvajanic Sabha, have consented to form a Reception Committee in whose hands will rest the whole of the local arrangements. The Peshwah's Garden near the Parbati Hill will be utilised both as a place of meeting (it contains a fine Hall, like the garden, the property of the Sabha) and as a residence for the delegates, each of whom will be there provided with suitable quarters. Much importance is attached to this, since, when all thus reside *together* for a week, far greater opportunities for friendly intercourse will be afforded than if the delegates were (as at the time of the late Bombay demonstrations) scattered about in dozens of private lodging houses all over the town.

Delegates are expected to find their own way to and from Poona—but from the time they reach the Poona Railway Station until they leave it again, everything that they can need, carriage, accommodation, food, etc., will be provided for them gratuitously.

The cost thus involved will be defrayed from the Reception Fund, which the Poona Association most liberally offers to provide in the first instance, but to which all delegates, whose means warrant their incurring this further expense, will be at liberty to contribute any sum they please. Any unutilised balance of such donations will be carried forward as a nucleus for next year's Reception Fund.

It is believed that exclusive of our Poona friends, the Bombay Presidency, including Sindh and the Berars, will furnish about 90 delegates, Madras and Lower Bengal each about the same number, and the N.W. Provinces, Oudh, and the Panjab together about half this number.

Very modest were they, and very accurate withal in their estimate of seventy delegates, for seventy-two actually recorded their names as Representatives, while another thirty attended as friends, being, as Government servants, precluded from acting as Representatives in a political gathering. The first meeting did not, however, take place at Poona, for, only a few days before Christmas, some sporadic cases of cholera occurred, possibly presaging an outbreak, and it was thought wiser to move the Conference, now called the Congress, to Bombay. The Managers of the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College and Boarding House placed the whole of their fine buildings at the disposal of the Congress, and all was ready by the morning of the 27th December for the reception of the Representatives of the Indian Nation. As we glance over the lists of those who were present, how many we see who became famous in the annals of India's struggle for Freedom. Among those who could not act as Representatives—for the reason given above—we note the Reformer, Dewan Bahadur R. Yaghunath Rao, Deputy Collector of Madras, the Hon. Mr. Mahadev G. Ranade, then member of the Legislative Council and Small Cause Court Judge of Poona, later to be a Judge of the High Court of Bombay, and leader honoured and trusted; Lala Baijnath of Agra was there, to be known as scholar and writer later on; and Professors K. Sundararaman and R.G. Bhandarkar. Among the Representatives may be noted editors of well-known Indian papers, of *The Dnyan Prakash*, *The Quarterly Journal* of the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha, *The Maratha*, *The Kesari*, *The Nababibhakar*, *The Indian Mirror*, *The Nossim*, *The Hindusthani*, *The Tribune*, *The Indian Union*, *The Spectator*, *The Indu Prakash*, *The Hindu*, *The Crescent*. How many names shine out, familiar and honoured: Mr. A.O. Hume is there from Simla; W.C. Bonnerjee and Norendranath Sen from Calcutta; W.S. Apte and G.G. Agarkar from Poona; Gangaprasad Varma from Lucknow; Dadabhai Naoroji, K.T. Telang, Pherozeshah M. Mehta—then, as now, leader of the Bombay Corporation, D.E. Wacha, B.M. Malabari, N.G. Chandavarkar, from Bombay; P. Rangiah Naidu, President of the Mahajana Sabha, S. Subrahmanya Aiyar, P. Ananda Charlu, G. Subrahmanya

Aiyar, M. Viraraghavachariar, from Madras ; P. Kesava Pillai from Anantapur. These are among the earliest who wrought for India's Freedom, and those yet on earth, are working for her still.

At 12 noon, on December 28th, 1885, in the Hall of the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College, the First National Congress met. The first voices heard were those of Mr. A.O. Hume, the Hon. Mr. S. Subrahmania Aiyar and the Hon. Mr. K.T. Telang, who proposed, seconded and supported the election of the first President, Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee. A solemn and historic moment was that in which the first of the long line of men thus honoured by the Motherland took his seat, to preside over her first National Assembly.

After alluding to the representative and weighty character of the Congress, he laid down under four heads the objects of the Congress :

(a) The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in the various parts of the Empire.

(b) The eradication, by direct friendly personal intercourse, of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country, and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in our beloved Lord Ripon's ever memorable reign.

(c) The authoritative record, after this has been carefully elicited by the fullest discussion, of the matured opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing of the social questions of the day.

(d) The determination of the lines upon and methods by which during the next twelve months it is desirable for Native politicians to labour in the public interests.

**GENESIS OF POLITICAL MOVEMENT IN INDIA\***

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the recognised progenitor of modern India, was the first apostle of a political creed based upon constitutional agitation in this country. But the political gospel which his versatile genius preached was, under the circumstances of the country very properly subordinated to the prior claims of religious, social and educational reforms, and like all gospels of truth, which have revolutionised human society whether in ancient or modern times, it naturally took time to establish its hold upon the public mind and present any tangible results. His mission to England in 1832 was no doubt a political one ; but the remarkable evidence which he gave before a committee of the House of Commons attracted more attention in England than in India, and although that evidence was largely responsible for some of the reforms effected in the Indian administration shortly after his death the Indian public were very little influenced by it at the time. It was not until the fifties of the last century that with the dawning light of Western Education of which the pioneer Indian Reformer was perhaps the greatest champion of his time, the public mind began to expand and political ideas and activities began to manifest themselves in one form or another in different parts of the country. Since then an association here and an association there sprung up, like a few cases in the desert, some of which no doubt possessed a degree of vitality, but most of which were of ephemeral existence. The British Indian Association in Bengal and the Bombay Association in the Western Presidency were almost simultaneously started about the year 1851, the former under the guidance and inspiration of stalwarts like Mr. Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Dr. Rajendralal Mitra, Mr. Ramgopal Ghosh ; Raja Digamvar Mitter, Mr. Pearychand Mitter and Mr. Harish Chandra Mukherjea, the pioneer of independent Indian journalism ; while the latter owed its origin to the patriotic labours of Mr. Juggannath

\*From Ambika Charan Mazumdar, *Indian National Evolution*, Chapter II. Mazumdar presided over the Lucknow Congress held in 1916.



Sankersett, who was the first non-official member of the Bombay Legislative Council established in 1863, and of that venerable political Rishi who, thank God, after a strenuous active life extending over half a century, now sits in his quiet retreat at Versova as the patron saint of the Indian political world, silently watching and guarding its interests and occasionally cheering it with messages of hope and confidence—Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji.\* As the genius of Mr. Kristodas Pal ultimately raised the British Indian Association to a power in Bengal, so the Bombay Association owed not a little of its usefulness to its subsequent acquisition of the services of Sir Mangaldas Nathubhoy and Mr. Naoroji Furdunji who for his stout and fearless advocacy of the popular cause received, like Ramgopal Ghosh and Kristodas Pal in Bengal, the appellation of the "Tribune of the People" in connection with his many fights in the Municipal Corporation of Bombay so graphically described in that excellent book which has recently been written by Mr. Dinshaw Edulji Wacha on "*The Rise and Growth of Bombay Municipal Government*.\* But while the British Indian Association has vigorously maintained a useful existence for more than half a century, the Bombay Association did not survive more than a decade, and although it was revived in 1870 and galvanized into fresh life by Mr. Naoroji Furdunji in 1873, it shortly became practically extinct in an unequal competition with the East India Association which again in its turn fell into a moribund condition in the early eighties. The Southern Presidency was still more slow in developing its public life; there was an old association called the "Madras Native Association", chiefly worked by some officials, which possessed very little vitality and had practically little or no hold upon the public mind in Madras. Madras was first vivified into life by that able and independent journal, *the Hindu*, which was started in 1878 under the auspices of a galaxy of stars in Southern India composed of Ananda Charlu, Veeraraghavachari, Rangiah Naidu and G. Subramania Iyer

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\**The Rise and Growth of Bombay Municipal Government* by D.E. Wacha. G.A. Natesan and Co., Publishers, Madras.

(alas ! all of whom have now vanished into space). At Poona the *Sarvajanik Sabha* was started towards the middle of the seventies under the management of Rao Bahadur Krishnaji Laxaman Nulkar, Mr. Sitaram Hari Chiplonkar and several other gentlemen of light and leading who gave the first impetus to public activities in the Deccan.

There were practically all the important public bodies in the country between the fifties and the early seventies of the last century which, though exercising no inconsiderable influence within their limited spheres of particular activities, were but the general exponents of particular interests and for a long time devoted mainly to occasional criticisms of important administrative or legislative measures affecting their respective provinces. Constructive policy they had none, and seldom if ever they laid down any programme of systematic action for the political advancement of the country. In fact, the idea of a united nationality and of national interests ; the cultivation of politics in its wider aspects as the fundamental basis of national progress and not merely as a means to temporary administrative make shifts ; the all-embracing patriotic fervour which like the Promethean spark has now made the dead bones in the valley instinct with life ; and, above all, the broad vision of political emancipation which has now dawned upon the people and focussed their energies and has directed their operations towards a definite goal and common aspiration, throwing all local and sectional considerations largely into the background—there were still very remote though not altogether foreign to the aims and objects of these Associations. But from this it must not be inferred that it is at all suggested, that these conceptions were the sudden evolution of a single year, or the revelation of a single evangelist who saw them in an apocalypse and proclaimed them to a wondering people at a single session of the Congress in the blessed year of 1885. Great events always cast their shadows before. Prior to 1880 even the semblance of a political status the people had none, while their economic condition was becoming more and more straitened every day. Indian wants and grievances were

accumulating with the rapidly changing conditions of the country, education was expanding Indian views and aspirations and Indian thoughts from various causes had been for a long time in a state of ferment mainly seeking for some sort of palliatives for the complicated diseases from which the country had been helplessly suffering in almost every direction.

### THE BIRTH OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS\*

#### *Indian National Congress an English Product*

It is an undisputed historical fact, that the idea of the Indian National Congress was a product of Lord Dufferin's brain ; that he suggested it to Mr. Hume, and that the latter undertook to work it out. We have no means of knowing whether Mr. Hume communicated the fact to all the Indian leaders who joined hands with him in organising it, but in all probability he told some of them. The fact leaked out, however, in Lord Dufferin's lifetime, was published in the press, brought to his notice and never denied by him. Nor did Mr. Hume, who died only in 1912, ever deny it. It has since been admitted to be true by his biographer, Sir William Wedderburn, another veteran Congress leader. Sir William says on page 59 of his *Life of Mr. Hume* ; "*Indeed in initiating the National Movement, Mr. Hume took counsel with the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, and whereas he was himself disposed to begin his reform propaganda on the social side, it was apparently by Lord Dufferin's advice that he took up the work of political organisation as the first matter to be dealt with*". We have no hesitation in accepting the accuracy of the statement made by Sir William Wedderburn as to what Lord Dufferin told Mr. Hume, because we have no doubt about Mr. Hume's sincerity of purpose. Lord Dufferin did evidently tell Mr. Hume that "as head of the Government, he had found the greatest difficulty in ascertaining the real wishes of the people : and that for purposes of administration it would be a public benefit if there existed

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\*† rom Lala Lajpat Rai, *Young India*, Part II, pp. 112-121. Lalaji presided over the Special Congress session held at Calcutta in 1920.

some responsible organisation through which the Government might be kept informed regarding the best Indian public opinion". Sir William Wedderburn assures us that "these kindly counsels (i.e., those given by Lord Dufferin) were received with grateful appreciation by all concerned", and "indeed so cordial were the relations" between the officials and the Congress leaders that "Lord Dufferin was approached with a view to the first Congress being held under the presidency of Lord Reay, then Governor of Bombay". We are told that Lord Dufferin welcomed the proposal as showing the desire of the Congress to work in complete harmony with the Government, but he saw many difficulties in accepting the proposal, and so the idea was abandoned. "Nonetheless the first Congress was opened with the friendly sympathy of the highest authorities."

So this is the genesis of the Congress, and this is sufficient to condemn it in the eyes of the advanced Nationalists. There is no parallel to this in the history of the world. Who has ever heard of a movement for political liberty being initiated by a despotic government, which is foreign in its agency and foreign in its methods ?

### *Hume, a Lover of Liberty*

It is obvious that when Lord Dufferin expected a political organisation to represent the best Indian opinion, it was far from his mind to suggest an organisation that would demand parliamentary government for India, or self-government on colonial lines. What he evidently aimed at was a sort of an innocuous association which should serve more as a "safety valve" than as a genuine nationalist organisation for national purposes. Mr. Hume may have meant more. He was a lover of liberty and wanted political liberty for India under the aegis of the British Crown. He was an English patriot, and as such he wanted the continuance of the British connection with India. He saw danger to British rule in discontent going underground, and one of his objects in establishing the

Congress was to save British rule in India from an impending calamity of the gravest kind which he thought was threatening it at that time. In his reply to Sir Auckland Colvin, he admitted that 'a safety valve for the escape of great and growing forces generated by British connection was urgently needed, and no more efficacious safety valve than the Congress movement could possibly be devised.' This correspondence between Sir Auckland Colvin, then Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces, and Mr. Hume reveals the whole genesis of the Congress movement, and is so clear and illuminating that no student of Indian politics can afford to neglect it.

It leaves no doubt whatsoever that the immediate motive which underlay the idea of starting the Congress was to save the Empire from "the danger" that loomed ahead "tremendous in the immediate future," "the misery of the masses acted on by the bitter resentment of individuals among the educated class". In the words of Mr. Hume, "no choice was left to those who gave the primary impetus to the movement. The ferment, the creation of Western ideas, education, invention, and appliances, was at work with a rapidly increasing intensity, and it became of paramount importance to find for its products an overt and constitutional channel for discharge, instead of leaving them to fester, as they had already commenced to do, under the surface". Mr. Hume further adds that though "in certain provinces and from certain points of view the movement was premature, *yet from the most important point of view, the future maintenance of the integrity of the British Empire*, the real question when the Congress started was not is it premature, but is it too late? will the country now accept it?" Indeed, by that test, the events proved that the Indian National Congress was a great success, and that either Mr. Hume's reading of the political situation was exaggerated or that his remedy proved efficacious.

#### *Congress to Save British Empire from Danger*

But one thing is clear, that the Congress was started more with the object of saving the British Empire from danger than

with that of winning political liberty for India. The interests of the British Empire were primary and those of India only secondary and no one can say that the Congress has not been true to that ideal. It might be said with justice and reason that the founders of the Indian National Congress considered the maintenance of British rule in India of vital importance to India herself, and therefore were anxious to do everything in their power, not only to save that rule from any danger that threatened it but even to strengthen it; that with them the redress of political grievances and the political advance of India was only a by-product and of secondary importance.

On the strength of an illuminating memorandum found among his papers, Hume's biographer has stated the nature of the evidence that "convinced" Mr. Hume at the time (i.e., about 15 months before Lord Lytton left India), that the British were "in immediate danger of a terrible outbreak". We will give it in Mr. Hume's own words :

"I was shown several large volumes (corresponding to a certain mode of dividing the country, excluding Burma, Assam, and some minor tracts) containing a vast number of entries; English abstracts or translations—longer or shorter—of vernacular reports or communications of one kind or another, all arranged according to districts (not identical with ours), sub-districts, sub-divisions and the cities, towns and villages included in these. The number of these entries was enormous; there were said, at the time, to be communications from over thirty thousand different reporters. I did not count them, they seemed countless; but in regard to the towns and villages of one district of the North-West Provinces with which I possess a peculiarly intimate acquaintance—a troublesome part of the country, no doubt—there were nearly three hundred entries, a good number of which I could [partially verify, as to the names of the people, etc". He mentions that he had the volumes in his possession only for a week; into six of them he only dipped; but he closely examined one covering the greater portion of the North-West Provinces, Oudh, Bihar,

parts of Bundelkhund and parts of the Punjab ; and so far as possible verified the entries referring to those districts with which he had special personal acquaintance. Many of the entries reported conversations between men of the lowest classes, "all going to show that these poor men were pervaded with a sense of the hopelessness of the existing state of affairs ; that they were convinced that they would starve and die, and that they wanted to do *something*, and stand by each other, and *that something meant violence*" (for innumerable entries referred to the secretion of old swords, spears and matchlocks, which would be ready when required. It was not supposed that the immediate result, in its initial stages, would be a revolt against the Government, or a revolt at all in the proper sense of the word. What was predicted was a sudden violent outbreak of sporadic crimes, murders of obnoxious persons, robbery of bankers, looting of bazaars). "In the existing state of the lowest half-starving classes it was considered that the first few crimes would be the signal for hundreds of similar ones, and for a general development of lawlessness, paralysing the authorities and the respectable classes. It was considered also, that everywhere the small bands would join the movement, assume here and there the lead, give the leaf ; that all the bad characters in the country would join, and that very soon after the bands obtained formidable proportions, a certain small number of the educated classes, at the time desperately, perhaps unreasonably, bitter against the Government, would join the movement, assume here and there the lead, give the outbreak cohesion, and direct it as a national revolt".

To this, Sir William Wedderburn adds further from his own personal knowledge :

"The forecast of trouble throughout India was in exact accordance with what actually occurred, under my own observation, in the Bombay Presidency in connection with the agrarian rising known as the Deccan riots. These began with sporadic gang robberies and attacks on the money-lenders, until the bands of dacoits, combining together, became too

strong for the police ; and the whole military force at Poona, horse, foot, and artillery, had to take the field against them. Roaming through the jungle tracts of the Western Ghats, these bands dispersed in the presence of military forces, only to reunite immediately at some convenient point ; and from the hill stations of Mahabaleshwar and Matheran we could at night see the light of their camp fires in all directions. A leader from the more instructed class was found, calling himself Sivaji, the Second, who addressed challenges to the Government, offered a reward of 500 rupees for the head of H.E. Sir Richard Temple (then Governor of Bombay), and claimed to lead a national revolt upon the lines on which the Maharata power had originally been founded".

So, in the words of these two leaders, the immediate motive of the Congress was to save the British Empire from this danger. There is, however, one difficulty in believing outright that this was the immediate reason of the birth of the Congress. Mr. Hume is said to have seen this evidence at the time he was in the service of the Government, *viz.*, fifteen months before Lord Lytton left India. Between then and the first meeting of the Congress in 1885 intervened a period of about seven years. During this time Lord Ripon was Viceroy for five years. The idea of starting a political organisation on the lines of the Congress is said to have originated with Lord Dufferin.

This is a little inconsistent with the theory that the Congress was founded out of fear of a political outbreak and was to be in the nature of a safety valve. Nor is the latter theory consistent with Mr. Hume's first political manifesto addressed to the graduates of the Calcutta University in March, 1883. This document is so manly in its outspokenness, so true in its principles, that we will quote the whole of it (or at least as much of it as is given in Mr. Hume's biography). Addressing the graduates of the University, Mr. Hume wrote :

"Constituting, as you do, a large body of the most highly educated Indians, you should, in the natural order of things,



constitute also the most important source of all mental, moral, social, and political progress in India. *Whether in the individual or the nation, all vital progress must spring from within, and it is to you, her most cultured and enlightened minds, her most favoured sons, that your country must look for the initiative.* In vain may aliens, like myself, love India and her children, as well as the most loving of these ; in vain may they, for her and their good, give time and trouble, money and thought ; in vain may they struggle and sacrifice ; they may assist with advice and suggestions ; they may place their experience, abilities and knowledge at the disposal of the workers, but they lack the essential of nationality, and the real work must ever be done by the people of the country themselves. Scattered individuals, however capable and however well-meaning, are powerless singly. What is needed is union, organisation and a well-defined line of action ; and to secure these an association is required, armed and organised with unusual care, having for its object to promote the mental, moral, social and political regeneration of the people of India. Our little army must be *sui generis* in discipline and equipment, and the question simply is how many of you will prove to possess, in addition to your high scholastic attainments, the unselfishness, moral courage, self-control, and active spirit of benevolence which are essential in all who should enlist ?”

Even truer and nobler are the sentiments in the final appeal which ended this letter and which runs thus :

“As I said before, you are the salt of the land. *And if amongst even you, the elite, fifty men cannot be found with sufficient power of self sacrifice, sufficient love for and pride in their country, sufficient genuine and unselfish heartfelt patriotism to take the initiative, and if needs be, devote the rest of their lives to the cause, then there is no hope for India.* Her sons must and will remain mere humble and helpless instruments in the hands of foreign rulers, for *‘they who would be free, themselves must strike the blow’*. And if even the leaders of thought are all either such poor creatures, or so selfishly wedded to personal

concerns, that they dare not or will not strike a blow for their country's sake, then justly and rightly are they kept down and trampled on, for they deserve nothing better. *Every nation secures precisely as good a government as it merits.* If you, the picked men, the most highly educated of the nation, cannot, scorning personal ease and selfish ends, *make a resolute struggle to secure freedom for yourselves and your country,* a more impartial administration, a larger share in the management of your own affairs, then we, your friends, are wrong, and our adversaries right ; then are Lord Ripon's aspirations for your good fruitless and visionary ; then, at present, at any rate, all hopes of progress are at an end, and India truly neither lacks nor deserves any better government than she now enjoys. Only if this be so, let us hear no more factious, peevish complaints that you are kept in leading strings, and treated like children, for you will have proved yourselves such. *Men know how to act.* Let there be no more complaints of Englishmen being preferred to you in all important offices, for if you lack that public spirit, that highest form of altruistic devotion that leads men to subordinate private ease to the public weal, that true patriotism that has made Englishmen what they are, then rightly are these preferred to you and rightly and inevitably have they become your rulers. And rulers and taskmasters they must continue, let the yoke gall your shoulders ever so sorely, until you realise and stand prepared to act upon the eternal truth, *whether in the case of individuals or nations, self-sacrifice and unselfishness are the only unfailing guides to freedom and happiness."*

The capitals and italics are, except in two cases, ours. In the original there are only two italics, (1) the word *themselves* in the sentence "they who would be free, *themselves* must strike the blow," and, (2) "*Men* know how to act." Now these are not the words of a diplomat, much less those of a hypocrite. Mr. Hume was too noble not to mean what he said, and the present writer has no doubt but that Mr. Hume was absolutely sincere in what he said. He had a passion for liberty. His heart bled at the sight of so much misery and poverty as

prevailed in India, and which according to him was preventable by good government. He burned with indignation at the "cowardly" behaviour of his countrymen towards Indians and he could not help feeling ashamed at the way in which pledges given and promises made were being ignored. He was an ardent student of history and knew full well that no government, whether national or foreign, had conceded popular demands without pressure from below. In the case of an alien government, the chances were even still more meagre. He therefore wanted the Indians "to strike" for their liberty if they wanted it. The first step was to organise. So he advised organisation.

Nor are we prepared to believe that men like Ranade, Tilak, Naoroji, W.C. Bonnerjee, Ajudhia Nath and Tyabji were only tools in the hands of the Britishers. No, we do not think so. They were all true and good patriots. They loved their country and they started the National Congress with the best of motives. It is possible that with some British sympathisers the interests of the British Empire were primary, and they sided with the Congress because they believed that thereby they could best secure the Empire ; but the writer of this book knows from personal experience how deeply the love of humanity and liberty is embedded in the hearts of some Britishers, and he is compelled to believe that at least some of those who showed their sympathy with the Congress were of that kind.

The Imperialist Junker and Jingo calls such men "Little Englanders", but the truth is that their hearts are too big to be imperial. They believe in humanity, and in liberty being the birthright of every human being. In their eyes a tyrant, one who robs others of their liberty, one who bases his greatness on the exploitation of others, or deprives them of their rights by might or clever diplomacy, does not cease to be so by the fact of his being their countryman. They are patriots themselves and will shed the last drop of their blood in the defence of their liberty, and in the defence of their country's liberty

and independence, but their patriotism does not extend to the point of *applauding* their country's robbing others of theirs. Yes, there are Britons who are sincere friends of the cause of liberty all over the globe. They deplore that their country should be ruling India at all, and if it were in their power, they would at once withdraw from India. Some of these sympathise with the Indian Nationalists in all sincerity, and have done so ever since the Indian National Congress was started or even from before that time. It is no fault of theirs if the Indian Nationalist Movement has not been such a success as they would have wished it to be, and if it has not been able to achieve anything very tangible. The fault is purely that of the Indians, and of the Indians alone, or of the circumstances.

## THE BIRTH OF THE CONGRESS\*

### I

The history of the Congress is really the history of India's struggle for freedom. For centuries the Indian Nation has been under foreign supremacy and the Congress has striven for half a century to free the country from this subjection, the beginnings of which in its latest phase may be traced to the advent to India of a trading concern.

The East India Company had during nearly a hundred years of commercial and political activity acquired large tracts of the country in India and had begun to enjoy the rights of a ruling power. After 1772 its activities were subject to scrutiny from time to time by the British Parliament and every renewal of its Charter was preceded by an inquiry on behalf of the British Government. As the commercial aspect of its activity had gone more and more into the background and the political aspect come more and more into the forefront, this scrutiny had become more and more searching. While it would not be right to imagine that anything like a close supervision was

\*From B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Chapter 1. (Sitaramayya presided over the Jaipur Congress held in 1948.)

maintained, there were not men wanting among the British who studied the Indian problem in great detail, followed the action and programme of the East India Company with care and vigilance, and were not slow to bring them before Parliament for consideration and redress. The great interest which Edmund Burke, Sheridan and Fox exhibited in the last quarter of the 18th century served to focus public opinion on the misdeeds of the Company's agents. Although the impeachment of Warren Hastings failed in its objective, it exposed the oppression and tyranny which used to be practised. Every periodical inquiry preceding renewal of the Charter resulted in the enunciation of some principles of far-reaching consequence, even though these principles were not followed in practice. More than once it was laid down as the policy to be followed that the agents of the Company should not attempt to extend its territorial acquisitions, but every time, an opportunity occurred or was created which enabled them to disregard the injunction, and the territories went on expanding. It is not necessary here to go into the history, full of black and treacherous deeds, full of the exhibition of low and rapacious human nature, full of the wreckages of broken engagements and treaties, of the acquisition of India by the East India Company. Nor is it necessary to go into an examination of the treachery and faithlessness of the Indians as amongst themselves, or of the ways and means employed by the agents of the Company to amass huge fortunes for themselves, apart from what they made available to the Company and its Directors. Suffice it to say that immense wealth was acquired, and formed in due course the nucleus, and perhaps the bulk, of that capital which enabled England on the advent of the steam engine and the machine to establish her industrial supremacy in the world in the nineteenth century.

When the Regulating Act was passed in 1774 and a Board of Control was appointed over the Court of Directors of the Company, and a Governor-General with a Council, the British Parliament for the first time took some responsibility for the administration of the territories already acquired. This control

grew in course of time and another Act in 1785 followed. The Charter was renewed after investigations in 1793, 181<sup>1</sup>, 1833 and 1853. In 1833 it was enacted that "no native of the said territories, nor any natural born subject of His Majesty resident therein, shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of them be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the said Company" and the Court of Directors explained its import as follows :

"The Court conceive this section to mean that there shall be no governing caste in British India ; that whatever other tests of qualification may be adopted, distinction of race or religion shall not be of the number ; that no subject of the King, whether of Indian or British or mixed descent, shall be excluded from the posts usually conferred on uncovenanted servants in India, or from the covenanted service itself, provided he be otherwise eligible."

By the same Act the rights of the Company to trade in India were abolished and it became divested henceforth of its character as a trading concern and became entirely a ruling authority.

A controversy arose about this time regarding the introduction of English education into India. With the powerful support of Raja Rammohan Roy among Indians and Macaulay among the Britishers, it was set at rest in favour of English education as against education in Indian languages and literature. Thus were laid the foundations of that system which continues to this day.

There was no Press in those days except such as was conducted by Englishmen, some of whom had to suffer even deportation from India. Lord William Bentinck's Governor-Generalship was remarkable for the aforesaid reforms and was also lenient towards the Press. His successor, Sir Charles Metcalfe, removed the restrictions against the Press which remained free till the Viceroyalty of Lord Lytton, with the

exception of a brief period during the time of the Revolt of 1857.

Between 1833 and 1853 the Punjab and Sindh had been conquered, and the policy of Lord Dalhousie resulting in the annexation of the States of those rulers who died without issue, and of Oudh on the ground of maladministration by the then ruler, had added considerably to the territories of the Company, making the extent of British India what it has remained ever since. The economic drain resulting in the impoverishment of the people, the loss of territory and the establishment of a foreign rule had created resentment and discontent, and the Revolt of 1857 was the last armed attempt to throw off the foreign yoke. It was undoubtedly tinged with some religious motive, but the fact that the titular Emperor of Delhi, the descendant of Akbar and Aurangzeb, and the descendant of the Peshwa of Poona were the rallying points round whom the effort to establish an Indian Raj revolved, shows that the Revolt represented not only the accumulated effect of all that had been perpetrated during a hundred years since the battle of Plassey in 1757, but also the natural desire in the human breast of every country and community to be ruled by its own people and no others. The Revolt failed but with it also disappeared the East India Company, and the Government of India directly passed into the hands of the British Crown, that is, the British Parliament. The Queen's Proclamation issued on this occasion went a great way in creating an atmosphere of calm and faith which kept the country in a condition of peace. Whatever discontent there was became absolutely helpless. The nobility, particularly the Muslim nobility, was practically crushed out of existence and there was not even a titular person left to serve as a rallying point in any future adventure like that of 1857. The British Rule came to be recognised as a dispensation of Providence and India settled down with that resignation which is one of our national characteristics.

The Government of India, ever after its assumption by the Crown, continued to carry on much in the same way as before

except that there were no wars for twenty years to disturb the even tenor of its rule.

This does not mean that there was no trouble and no discontent. There were serious defects in British administration which were pointed out and sought to be remedied by sympathetic British officials like Mr. Hume.

As has been stated earlier, the Act of 1833 had made Indians eligible for all posts for which they were qualified. When the Charter was under consideration in 1853 it was freely stated in Parliament, that although the Act of 1833 had theoretically made Indians eligible, they had not been in practice given any posts which they would not have occupied before that Act. When the system of competitive examination for the Civil Service was introduced in 1853, it was pointed out that that would put a great handicap on Indians, as they would find it practically impossible to come to England to compete with English boys in an examination in English language and literature on the off chance of securing posts. In spite of the handicaps Indians, though few, crossed the seas and succeeded, and it was left to Lord Salisbury to reduce the age at which students could compete, thus enhancing the handicap on Indians who, with the support of Englishmen, had been crying for simultaneous examinations in India and England. Lord Lytton in India muzzled the Vernacular Press, along with the English Press, had enjoyed freedom since the days of Metcalfe. He further passed an Arms Act which not only deprived Indians of the right of bearing arms but also introduced another galling distinction between Indians and Europeans.

Then there were famines which showed that it was not so much scarcity of foodgrains as the lack of the wherewithal to purchase them that resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of people all over the country. There was also the expensive Afghan War. While famine and death were stalking the land it was considered fit to hold a Durbar at Delhi at which the Queen assumed the title of the Empress of India. "Economic, in addition to political, troubles were actively at



work throughout the country. The physical suffering of the many, acted on by the apathy and selfishness of the few, was rapidly bringing popular unrest to the danger point."

The peasantry was oppressed by certain "notorious practical grievances" referred to by Mr. Hume in his celebrated letter to Sir Auckland Colvin. They led to complaints not loud but deep with regard to (a) the costly and unsuitable Civil Courts, (b) the corrupt and oppressive Police, (c) the rigid Revenue system, and (d) the galling administration of the Arms Act and the Forest Act. People prayed for but despaired of getting (a) justice cheap, sure and speedy, (b) a Police they could look up to as friends and protectors, (c) a Land Revenue system more elastic and sympathetic, and (d) a less harsh administration of the Arms and Forest Laws. That was in fact the situation towards the beginning of the eighties. Indeed, it was such that Sir W. Wedderburn says that the bureaucracy had not only done their best to prevent new concessions; they had also, when opportunity offered, taken away the privileges inherited from a former generation of reformers,—the liberty of the Press, the right of public meeting, Municipal Self-Government and the independence of the Universities. "These ill starred measures of reaction," writes Sir William, "combined with Russian methods of Police repression brought India under Lord Lytton within measurable distance of a Revolutionary outbreak and it was only in time that Mr. Hume was inspired to intervene." Something more: Mr. Hume had unimpeachable evidence that the political discontent was going underground. He came into possession of seven volumes containing reports of the seething revolt incubating in various districts, based upon the communications of the disciples of various *gurus* to their religious heads. This was towards the end of Lord Lytton's rule, the seventies of the last century. The reports were arranged according to districts, sub-districts, sub-divisions, and the cities, towns and villages included in these. Not that an organised mutiny was ahead, but that the people pervaded with a sense of hopelessness, wanted to do something, by which was merely meant, "a sudden violent

outbreak of sporadic crime, murders of obnoxious persons, robbery of bankers and looting of bazaars, acts really of lawlessness which by a due coalescence of forces might any day develop into a National Revolt." Such were the agrarian riots of the Deccan in Bombay. Hume thereupon resolved to open a safety valve for this unrest and the Congress was such an outlet. It was at this time that he conceived the idea of bringing into existence a national gathering of Indians and to that end addressed to the graduates of the Calcutta University, on the 1st of March 1883, a soul-stirring letter in which he asked for fifty men, good and true, men of unselfishness, moral courage, self-control and active spirit of benevolence. "If only fifty men, good and true can be found to join as founders, the thing can be established and the further development will be comparatively easy." And what was the ideal placed before these men? A democratic constitution, freedom from personal ambitions and the dictum that "he that is greatest amongst you, let him be your servant." Hume did not mince matters at all but frankly told them that "If they cannot renounce personal ease and pleasure, then at present at any rate all hopes of progress are at an end; and India truly neither desires nor deserves any better Government than she enjoys."

The concluding portion of this memorable letter runs as follows :—

And if even the leaders of thought are all either such poor creatures, or so selfishly wedded to personal concerns that they dare not strike a blow for their country's sake, then justly and rightly are they kept down and trampled on, for they deserve nothing better. Every nation secures precisely as good a Government as it merits. If you, the picked men, the most highly educated of the nation, cannot, scorning personal ease and selfish objects, make a resolute struggle to secure greater freedom for yourselves and your country, a more impartial administration, a large share in the management of your own affairs, then we, your friends, are wrong and our adversaries right, then are Lord Ripon's

noble aspirations for your good fruitless and visionary, then, at present at any rate all hopes of progress are at an end and India truly neither desires nor deserves any better Government than she enjoys. Only, if this be so, let us hear no more factious, peevish complaints that you are kept in leading strings and treated like children, for you will have proved yourself such. *Men* know how to act. Let there be no more complaining of Englishmen being preferred to you in all important offices, for if you lack that public spirit, that highest form of altruistic devotion that leads men to subordinate private ease to the public weal, that patriotism that has made englishmen what they are,—then rightly are these preferred to you, rightly and inevitably have they become your rulers. And rulers and task-masters they must continue, let the yoke gall your shoulders never so sorely, until you realise and stand prepared to act upon the eternal truth that self-sacrifice and unselfishness are the only unfailing guides to freedom and happiness.”

Before we proceed to narrate the details relating to the birth of the Congress, it is but meet to recall the names of certain pre-Congress Elders whose labours in a way had laid the foundations of public life in this country.

The British Indian Association in Bengal was started in 1851 and was the institution in whose name men like Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra and Ramgopal Ghose had carried on public work for decades. The Association itself was an active power in the land for nearly half a century. In Bombay the organ of public work was the Bombay Association which had a shorter career than its fellow in Bengal, but had an equally vigorous record of work to its credit under the leadership of men like Sir Mangaldoss Nathubhai and Mr. Naoroji Furdunji. The Association owed its origin to Dadabhai Naoroji and Mr. Juggannath Shankar Seth. The East India Association, however, superseded this body in the seventieth of the last century. In the South, public life was really inaugurated by *The Hindu* amongst whose founders were the honoured names of Messrs. M. Veeraraghavachariar, the Hon'ble Rangiah Naidu, G.

Subrahmania Aiyar and N. Subbarau Pantulu. In Maharashtra, the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha which sprang up about the same time as *The Hindu*, was the medium through which public work was carried on by men like Messrs. Rao Bahadur K.L. Nulkar and S H. Chiplonkar.

In Bengal the Indian Association was founded in the year 1876, the moving spirit of the new body being Surendra Nath Banerjea and the first secretary being Ananda Mohan Bose. It must be noted that even in the seventies, public life was beginning to make itself felt by the authorities though it was not well-organised. The newspapers were already a powerful factor in it, for in 1875 there were as many as 475 newspapers, mostly in the provincial languages. Surendra Nath Banerjea, who by a fortunate chance for the country was relieved of his duties as a member of the Indian Civil Service, made his first political tour in Northern India covering the Punjab and the North-West Provinces (U.P.). He was present at the great Darbar held in Delhi, in 1877, and met the leading Princes and people of India at that assembly. It is believed that the idea of organising a vast political gathering was first conceived by Surendra Nath Banerjea under the inspiration furnished by that gathering of the Princes and people of India in 1877. In 1878 S.N. Banerjea visited the Bombay and Madras Presidencies in order to stimulate public opinion on the reactionary policy pursued by Lord Salisbury in reducing the age limit for the Civil Service Examination to 19 years, and to prepare an All-India Memorial to be presented to the House of Commons on the Civil Service question.

It was at this time that Lord Lytton inaugurated his reactionary rule, which was characterised by the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, the Afghan War, the costly Indian Darbar (1877) and the sacrifice of cotton import duties (1877). Lord Lytton was succeeded by Lord Ripon, who inaugurated a new era by concluding a treaty with the Amir of Afghanistan, by repealing the Vernacular Press Act, by promoting Local Self Government, and by introducing the Ilbert Bill. The last was a Bill

introduced in 1883 by Mr. Ilbert, the Law Member of the Government of India at the time, the object of which was to remove the bar against the Indian Magistracy trying European and likewise American offenders. This was greatly resented by the Anglo-Indians, some of whom entered into a conspiracy "to overpower the sentries of the Government House and to put the Viceroy on board a steamer at Chand Pal Ghat and send him to England *via* the Cape." This conspiracy had been formed by a number of men in Calcutta "who had bound themselves to carry out the aforesaid plan in the event of Government adhering to their projected legislation." The original Bill was almost abandoned in 1883 in favour of a bare recognition of the principle in the case of the District Magistrates and Sessions Judges only. When Lord Ripon retired he was given a farewell by Indians from one end of the country to the other, which was at once the envy of Englishmen and an eye-opener to many of them. Sir Auckland Colvin, says Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea in his 'A Nation in the Making', exclaimed. "If it be real, what does it mean?"

The success of the Anglo-Indians awakened the Indians who were not slow to realise that the inwardness of the opposition to the Bill was based on an assertion of racial superiority and its perpetuation. It taught the public men of India at the time the lessons of organisation; and immediately in the year 1883 there was held a political Conference at the Albert Hall in Calcutta, at which both S.N. Banerjea and A.M. Bose were present. It was at this meeting that S.N. Banerjea specifically referred, in his opening address, to the Delhi assemblage as furnishing the model for a like political organisation intended to espouse the country's cause. Mr. Ambika Charan Mazumdar writes in his book 'Indian National Evolution' that "it was an unique spectacle, of which the writer of these pages still retains a vivid impression, of immense enthusiasm and earnestness which throughout characterised the three days' session of the Conference, and at the end of which every one present seemed to have received a new light and a novel inspiration." It was in the following

year that the International Exhibition was held in Calcutta to which the Rev. John Murdoch traces the original inspiration for the Indian National Congress. It was in 1881 that the Madras Mahajana Sabha was established and Madras held a Provincial Conference in its turn. In the west the Bombay Presidency Association was started on 31st Jan. 1885 by that famous group of elders,—Mehta, Telang and Tyabji.

It is thus clear that India was feeling the need for some sort of an all-India organisation. It is shrouded in mystery as to who originated this idea of an All-India Congress. Apart from the great Darbar of 1877 or the International Exhibition in Calcutta, which, as stated above, are supposed to have furnished the model for the great national assemblage, it is also said that the idea was conceived in a private meeting of seventeen men after the Theosophical Convention held at Madras in December 1884. The Indian Union started by Mr. Hume after his retirement from the Civil Service is also supposed to have been instrumental in convening the Congress. Whatever the origin, and whoever the originator of the idea, we come to this conclusion that the idea was in the air, that the need of such an organisation was being felt, that Mr. Allan Octavian Hume took the initiative, and that it was in March 1885, when the first notice was issued convening the first Indian National Union to meet at Poona in the following December, that what had been a vague idea floating generally in the air and influencing simultaneously the thought of thoughtful Indians in the north and the south, the east and the west, assumed a definite shape and became a practical programme of action.

## II

It was not merely the political forces and the sense of political subjection that gave birth to the Congress. The Congress doubtless had its political objective, but it also was the organ and exponent of a movement of national renaissance. For fifty years and more before the birth of the Congress, the leaven of national rejuvenation had been at

work. In fact national life in its protean aspects was in a state of ferment so early as in the times of Rammohan Roy who may in one sense be regarded as the prophet of Indian Nationalism and the Father of modern India. He had a wide vision and a broad outlook. While it is true that the socio-religious condition of his day was the subject of his special attention in his reformist activities, he had nevertheless a keen sense of the grave political wrongs by which his country was afflicted at the time and made a strenuous effort to seek an early redress of those wrongs. Rammohan Roy was born in 1776 and passed away at Bristol in 1833. His name is associated with two great reforms in India, namely, the abolition of *Sati* or *Sahagamanam* and the introduction of Western learning into the country. In the acute controversy that raged in the thirties of the nineteenth century, Rammohan Roy took no small part and the final decision of Lord William Bentinck in 1835 in favour of Western learning, even as against the recommendations of the Court of Directors in London, was largely due to Rammohan Roy's own bias towards the Occidentalists and the influence he exercised over the public opinion of the day. In the closing period of his life he chose to visit England, and his passion for liberty was so great that when he reached the Cape of Good Hope he insisted on his being carried to a French vessel where he saw the flag of liberty flying, so that he might be able to do homage to that flag, and when he saw the flag he shouted, "Glory, Glory, Glory to the flag!" Although he had gone to England primarily as the ambassador of the Moghul Emperor to plead his cause in London, yet he took the opportunity to place some of the pressing Indian grievances before a Committee of the House of Commons. He submitted three papers, on the Revenue system of India, the Judicial system of India, and the Material condition of India. He was honoured by the East India Company with a public dinner. When in 1832 the Charter Act was before Parliament, he vowed that if the Bill was not passed he would give up his residence in the British dominion and reside in America. During his time he had witnessed the worst repression of the Press in India., 'The

good days of Indian Journalism inaugurated by Lord Hastings, the Governor-General, by relaxing the severe Press restrictions of former times were soon clouded by the temporary accession to the post of Governor-General, in '823, of Mr. John Adam, a member of the Civil Service." As a result one Mr. Buckingham, the Editor of *The Calcutta Journal*, was deported from India on two months' notice and Mr. Sanford Arnot, his assistant, was arrested in his office and put on board an England going vessel,—all this for some criticisms of the administration made by them. A Press Ordinance was passed on the 14th March 1823 which imposed the severest censorship upon the entire Press, both Anglo-Indian and Indian, and made it obligatory on the part of intending publishers and proprietors of newspapers to obtain a licence from the Governor-General. The Ordinance was pushed through the Supreme Court according to the Law then existing after only 20 days' publication in that Court.

Rammohan Roy fought against it in the Court by engaging the services of two lawyers, and when he failed, he got up a public petition to the King of England with no better result. But the seed that he sowed bore fruit in 1835 when Sir Charles Metcalfe liberated the Indian Press once again. While in England Rammohan Roy had the satisfaction of seeing the appeal of his adversaries against the abolition of *Sati* rejected by Parliament and also of seeing the Charter Act passed.

The story of the 'Indian Mutiny' so-called, arising primarily from the policy of Lord Dalhousie in denying the right of adoption to the widows of certain Princes and declaring their States escheat is well-known. The suppression of the rebellion was followed by the establishment of the Universities in 1858, and of the High Courts and the Legislative Councils in India between 1861 and 1863. Just before the 'mutiny' the 'Widow Remarriage Act' was passed as also the Act relating to conversion into Christianity. In the sixties of the nineteenth century then, intimate contact was established with Western learning and literature. Western legal institutions and Parlia-



mentary methods were inaugurated, to mark a new era in the field of law and legislation. The impact of Western civilization on the East could not but leave a deep impress upon the beliefs and sentiments of the Indian people who came directly under its influence. The germs of religious reform planted in the days of Rammohan Roy, became broadest ere long. Keshab Chandra Sen, on whose shoulders fell the mantle of Rammohan Roy, spread the gospel of the Brahmo Samaj far and wide and gave a new social orientation to its tenets. He turned his attention to the temperance movement and made common cause with the temperance reformers in England. He was largely responsible for the passing of the Civil Marriage Act,—III of 1872—which allowed a form of civil marriage to non-Christians, provided they declared themselves as not belonging to any of the following communities—Hindu, Christian, Muslim. Parsee or Jew. This Act abolished early marriage, made polygamy penal and sanctioned widow marriages and inter-caste marriages. He interested himself further in trying to raise the marriageable age of girls and prepared a Bill in 1872 on the subject which adopted 14 as the minimum age.

Ere long schisms arose in the Brahmo Samaj on account of the early marriage of Keshab Chandra Sen's daughter with the Maharaja of Cooch Bihar, which evoked protests amongst his fellow workers and led to the carving out of a protestant section under the name of 'Sadharan Brahmo Samaj' under the leadership of Ananda Mohan Bose. It is interesting to note that Ananda Mohan Bose later became the President of the Congress in 1898. The Brahmo Samaj of Bengal had its repercussions all over the country. In Poona, the movement assumed the name of Prarthana Samaj under the leadership of M G. Ranade, who, it will be remembered, was the founder of the Social Reform movement which for long years continued to be an adjunct of the Congress. One feature however of this reformist movement was a certain disregard for the past and a spirit of revolt from the time-honoured and traditional beliefs of the country, which arose from an under glamour

presented by the Western institutions and heightened greatly by the political prestige associated with them. Naturally then, there was bound to be a reaction, at any rate a correction, to the denationalising tendencies engendered by the reformist movements. The Arya Samaj in the north-west, founded by the venerable Swami Dayanada Saraswati, and the Theosophical movement from the south, furnished the necessary corrective to the spirit of heterodoxy and even heresy which the Western learning brought with it. Both of them were intensely Nationalist movements; only, the Arya Samaj movement which owed its birth to the inspiration of the great Dayananda Saraswati was aggressive in its patriotic zeal, and while holding fast to the cult of the infallibility of the Vedas and the superiority of the Vedic culture, was at the same time not inimical to broad social reform. It thus developed a virile manhood in the Nation which was the synthesis of what was best in its heredity, with what is best in its environment. It fought some of the prevailing social evils and religious superstitions in Hinduism much as the Brahmo Samaj had battled against polytheism, idolatry and polygamy. Of course, as was to be expected, there arose two schools in the Arya Samaj itself, composed of those of the Gurukula cult who stood for the Vedic ideals of Brahmacharya and religious service, and those who sought to regenerate society imbibing in due measure modern Western culture through the modern type of educational institutions. Swami Shraddhananda, the Martyr, and Lala Lajpat Rai, the Hero, stand out to us as marked exponents of the respective cults. The Theosophical movement, while it extended its studies and sympathies to the wide world, laid special emphasis on a rediscovery, as well as a rehabilitation of all that was great and glorious in the Oriental culture. It was this passion that led Mrs. Besant to start a college in Benares, the holy city of India. The Theosophical activities, while developing a spirit of international brotherhood, helped to check that sense of rationalist superiority of the West and planted anew a cultural centre in India which attracted the savants and the scholars of the West once again to this ancient land.

The latest phase of national renaissance in India prior to the Congress was inaugurated in Bengal by that great sage, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who later found in Swami Vivekananda, his chief apostle carrying his gospel East and West. The Ramakrishna Mission is not merely an organisation wedded to accultism on the one hand or realism on the other, but to a profound transcendentalism which, however, does not ignore the supreme duty of 'Loka-Sangraha' or social service. It also supplied the key to the solution of the many socio-political problems that confront the nations of the world to-day. All these movements were really so many threads in the strand of Indian Nationalism and the Nation's duty was to evolve a synthesis so as to be able to dispel prejudice and superstition, to renovate and purify the old faith, and Vedantic idealism, and reconcile it with the Nationalism of the new age. The Indian National Congress was destined to fulfil this great mission. How far it has been able to do it during the past half a century, it is for us to study.

### III

It was in the midst of these conditions that the establishment of the great Indian National Congress was conceived. Mr. Hume's idea was originally to allow provincial organisations like the Indian Association of Calcutta, the Presidency Association of Bombay, and the Mahajana Sabha of Madras to take up political questions, and the All-India National Union to concentrate more or less on social questions. He consulted Lord Dufferin who had recently come out as Viceroy, and the advice he gave cannot be better rendered than in the words of Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee who wrote in his 'Introduction to Indian Politics', published in 1898, as follows :—

"It will probably be news to many that the Indian National Congress, as it was originally started and as it has since been carried on, is in reality the work of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava when that nobleman was the Governor-General of India. Mr. A.O. Hume, C.B., had in 1884, conceived the

idea that it would be of great advantage to the country if leading Indian politicians could be brought together once a year to discuss social matters and be upon friendly footing with one another. He did not desire that politics should form part of their discussion, for, there were recognised political bodies in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and other parts of India, and he thought that these bodies might suffer in importance if, when Indian politicians from different parts of the country came together, they discussed politics. His idea further was that the Governor of the Province where the politicians met should be asked to preside over their deliberations, and that thereby great cordiality should be established between the official classes and the non-official Indian politicians. Full of these ideas he saw the noble Marquis when he went to Simla early in 1885, after Lord Dufferin had in the December previous assumed the Viceroyalty of India. Lord Dufferin took great interest in the matter and after considering over it for some time he sent for Mr. Hume and told him that, in his opinion, Mr. Hume's project would not be of much use. He said there was no body of persons in this country who performed the functions which Her Majesty's Opposition did in England. The newspapers, even if they really represented the views of the people, were not reliable and as the English were necessarily ignorant of what was thought of them and their policy in Native circles, it would be very desirable in their interests as well as the interests of the ruled that Indian politicians should meet yearly and point out to the Government in what respects the administration was defective and how it could be improved, and he added that an assembly such as he proposed should not be presided over by the Local Governor, for in his presence the people might not like to speak out their minds. Mr. Hume was convinced by Lord Dufferin's arguments and when he placed the two schemes, his own and Lord Dufferin's, before leading politicians in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, and other parts of the country, the latter unanimously accepted Lord Dufferin's scheme and proceeded to give effect to it. Lord Dufferin had made it a condition with Mr. Hume that his name in connection with

the scheme of the Congress should not be divulged so long as he remained in the country, and his condition was faithfully maintained and none but the men consulted by Mr. Hume knew anything about the matter."

In March 1885, it was decided to hold a meeting of the representatives from all parts of India at the ensuing Christmas. Poona was considered the most central and the most suitable place. From this meeting was issued the following circular :—

"A Conference of the Indian National Union will be held at Poona from the 25th to the 31st December, 1885.

The Conference will be composed of Delegates—leading politicians well-acquainted with the English language—from all parts of the Bengal, Bombay and Madras Presidencies.

The direct objects of the Conference will be : (1) to enable all the most earnest labourers in the cause of national progress to become personally known to each other ; (2) to discuss and decide upon the political operations to be undertaken during the ensuing year.

Indirectly, this Conference will form the germ of a Native Parliament, and if properly conducted, will constitute in a few years an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is still wholly unfit for any form of representative institutions. The first Conference will decide whether the next shall be again held at Poona, or whether, following the precedent of the British Association, the Conference shall be held year by year at different important centres.

This year the Conference being in Poona, Mr. Chiplonkar and others of the Sarvajanic Sabha have consented to form a Reception Committee, in whose hands will rest the whole of the local arrangements. The Peshwa's Garden near the Parbati Hill will be utilised both as a place of meeting (it contains a fine Hall, like the garden, the property of the Sabha) and as a residence for the dele-

gates, each of whom will be there provided with suitable quarters. Much importance is attached to this, since, when all thus reside together for a week, far greater opportunities for friendly intercourse will be afforded than if the delegates were (as at the time of the late Bombay demonstrations) scattered about in dozens of private lodging houses all over the town.

Delegates are expected to find their own way to and from Poona, but from the time they reach the Poona Railway Station until they again leave it, everything that they can need, carriage, accommodation, food, etc., will be provided for them gratuitously.

The cost thus involved will be defrayed from the Reception Fund, which the Poona Association most liberally offers to provide in the first instance, but to which all delegates, whose means warrant their incurring this further expense, will be at liberty to contribute any sum they please. Any unutilised balance of such donations will be carried forward as a nucleus for next year's Reception Fund.

It is believed that, exclusive of our Poona friends, the Bombay Presidency, including Sindh and the Berars, will furnish about 20 delegates, Madras and Lower Bengal each about the same number, and the N.W. Province, Oudh, and the Punjab together about half this number."

Having already armed himself with the blessings of the Viceroy in India, Mr. Hume proceeded to England and consulted Lord Ripon, Lord Dalhousie, Sir James Caird, John Bright, Mr. Reid, Mr. Slagg and other eminent men before he started the Congress. Under their advice he organised what became the nucleus of the Indian Parliamentary Committee in England to act for India by obtaining pledges from candidates for Parliamentary election, not that they would help India but only that they would take interest in Indian affairs. He further arranged an Indian Telegraph Union to provide funds to send telegrams on important matters to leading Provincial papers in England, with which he arranged for their publication.

## **CONGRESS—ASCENDANCY AND HOLD OF LIBERALISM**

The history of the Indian freedom movement is really the history of the Indian National Congress. With the establishment of this National Assembly in 1885, Indian freedom struggle took an organised form. It certainly marked the start of the country-wide struggle for the great cause of nationalism. A study of the Congress sessions reveals the underlying fact that, in the words of Deb Kant Barooah (former President of the Indian National Congress), there "has been a basic unity of thought, mind and purpose that always held this country together and the Indianness of her people was in their bones all along even if the country was fragmented from time to time by different political divisions". It is for this reason that the voice of the Indian freedom movement could not be quelled by the might of the alien rule, rather it grew more and more sharp and powerful with the passage of time and saw its grand achievement in the advent of independence in 1947.

### *First Session (1885)*

The great event of the inauguration of Indian national organisation took place on 27 December, 1885 at Bombay in the premises of Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College. Thanks to the efforts of the Bombay Presidency Association, the first gathering proved a brilliant success. People hailing from different parts of the country, professing faith in different religions and creeds, and belonging to different professions and walks of life took part in it. It was an impressive assemblage that included barristers, solicitors, pleaders, representa-

tives of the Legislative Councils and local bodies, merchants, landowners, bankers, medical practitioners, teachers, social reformers, press editors etc. By all means it was a grand collection of people demonstrating a thoroughly liberal and secular character of the national organisation. W.C. Bonnerjee, a barrister of Calcutta by profession and a Christian by faith, was chosen as the President and A.O. Hume as its Secretary. In his presidential address, Bonnerjee declared the 'aims and objects' of the organisation and made it quite plain in these significant words : "In meeting to discuss in an orderly and peaceable manner, questions of vital importance affecting their well-being, they were following the only course by which the Constitution of England enabled them to represent their views to the ruling authority".

On this important and ever-memorable occasion, nine resolutions were adopted that marked the beginning of the formulation of India's demands. Resolution I demanded the setting up of a Royal Commission to enquire into the working of Indian administration. Resolution II asked for the abolition of the India Council of the Secretary of State for India. Resolution III dealt with the shortcomings of the Legislative Councils. It criticised the system of the nomination of all members and in stead desired their clection. It also demanded the creation of such Councils in North-Western Provinces and Oudh (now U.P.) and in the Punjab. It also demanded increase in the rights of the members of the Councils in relation to asking questions from the Government and discussing budget. Finally, it demanded the setting up of a Standing Committee of the House of Commons to receive and consider any formal protests that might be recorded by the majorities of such Councils against the exercise by the Executive of the power, which would be vested in it, and of over-ruling the decisions of such majorities. Resolution IV prayed for the holding of simultaneous examinations for Indian Civil Service and the raising of the maximum age of the candidates to 23 years. Moreover, the competitive examinations should be held under conditions calculated to secure such intellectual,



moral, and physical qualifications as could be decided by the Government to be necessary. Resolutions V and VI demanded no increase in military expenditures. Resolution VII protested against the annexation of Upper Burma and its proposed incorporation with India. Resolution VIII enjoined the communication of the resolutions to Political Associations in each province and that these Associations be requested with the help of similar bodies and other agencies within their respective province to adopt such measures as they might consider calculated to advance the settlement of the various questions dealt with in these resolutions. Finally, Resolution IX fixed the next conference at Calcutta on 28 December, 1886.

## **POLITICAL PROGRESS IN INDIA**

### **I\***

The people of Bombay claim as the motto for their city "Urbs prima in India", and it is really not without reason. When the agitation over the Ilbert Bill was at white heat, and in Calcutta not only race division, but even division between English and English rendered social intercourse almost impossible, still the natives in Bombay kept their heads cool and discussed the question at a great representative meeting in the Town-hall with a discretion and moderation that left nothing to be desired. At the time of Lord Ripon's departure they showed themselves capable of organizing an ovation which not merely delighted the sympathizers with the recent benignant rule, but still more startled the great mass of Anglo-Indians as the first proof that the natives of India are really capable of a national movement.

This last week the Bombay leaders have again given proof of their organizing power. They brought together a National Congress composed of delegates from every political society of any importance throughout the country. Seventy-one members met together ; 29 great districts sent spokesmen. The whole

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\*Report dated 31 December, 1885 of the Bombay correspondent of the *Times Weekly Edition* dated 5 February, 1886.

of India was represented from Madras to Lahore, from Bombay to Calcutta. For the first time, perhaps, since the world began India as a nation met together. Its congeries of races, its diversity of castes, all seemed to find common ground in their political aspirations. Only one great race was conspicuous by its absence ; the Mahomedans of India were not there. They remained steadfast in their habitual separation. They certainly do not yield to either Hindu or Parsee in their capacity for development, but they persistently refuse to act in common with the rest of the Indian subjects of the Queen-Empress. Not only in their religion, but in their schools, and almost all their colleges, and all their daily life they maintain an almost haughty reserve. The reason is not hard to find. They cannot forget that less than two centuries ago they were the dominant race, while their present rivals in progress only counted as so many millions of tax paying units who contributed each his mite to swell the glory of Islam.

But, in spite of the absence of the followers of the Prophet, this was a great representative meeting last week. The delegates were mostly lawyers, school-masters, and newspaper editors, but there were some notable exceptions. Even supposing those three professions alone provided the delegates, the meeting would fairly represent the education and intellectual power of India. And now let us see what they did, what was the outcome of this important gathering. They discussed politics alone ; not a word was said of social reform. They evidently had a firm belief that a nation could be made happy by Acts of Parliament, for all they discussed and all they demanded was political power and political changes. A tone of most absolute loyalty pervaded all the proceedings ; the Empress was rapturously applauded, and many nice things were said of the beneficent effect of British rule. Education and material prosperity, order, security, and good Government were all incidentally mentioned as causes of gratitude towards the present rulers. But such allusions were only by the way. Every desire was concentrated on political advancement and an immense increase of the share at present given

to the natives of India in the Government of their own country. The question of their ability to govern themselves was never even touched by the wisest of the speakers. The major premise of all the arguments seemed to be "Every Hindoo is a born administrator. It is mere Western folly to think that representative Government is an act which only comes by long political training in all the lower stages of a citizen's life and the patient selection of the fittest". Much stress was laid on the need of a monster Commission of Inquiry into the whole existing administrative fabric. The vials of patriotic wrath were opened on the India Council, and a standing Committee of the House of Commons was thought a panacea for all evils. But though there was much crude talk, much of that haste which only makes delay, and that ignorance which demands premature concessions, there was also much of most noble aspiration and a sense of patriotism and national unity which is a new departure in the races of the East.

## II\*

Bombay has been making a noteworthy effort to substantiate its claim to be the leading city of India. At the end of last year it was the gathering place of discussion of public affairs. It is at Bombay therefore, that India has for the first time given proof of the existence of a national life and spirit. In India, as elsewhere, there is abundant room for improvement, not altogether, perhaps, in the directions to which the Congress points, not by the methods in which it chiefly trusts. The resolutions cover a wide ground. Some of them we very heartily approve. Others appear to us something more than questionable. But from first to last there is one common idea running through them. The Congress is not satisfied with the slender political power which the Natives of India possess. It demands for them a larger share in the deliberative and executive functions of Government. The memory of Lord Ripon's

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\*Editorial of *The Times* on the Indian National Congress.

administration is still held in honour at Bombay, and the Congress there met has given utterance to aspirations which Lord Ripon has had no small share in encouraging. On the representative character of the late Congress our information is not precise. Our correspondent tells us who were there and who were not there. Every important political society in India sent its delegates to Bombay, but of whom these political societies consist and for whom they can claim a right to speak we are not told. One great section of the native population was conspicuously not there. No Mahomedan took any part in the proceedings. The members present were drawn, for the most part, from three orders—native lawyers, native schoolmasters and native newspaper editors. There were some notable exceptions, but the rule was as we have said. It is what we might have expected before hand. The work of the Congress has certainly been entrusted to the hands most likely to be found capable of performing it and most forward in offering themselves for it. A more mixed assembly would have been less competent, perhaps, but its claim to be representatives all round might have been admitted with less doubt.

The first resolution of the Congress was in favour of a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the working of the Indian Administration. There is good ground for the request. It is now nearly thirty years since the government of the country was transferred from the East-India Company to the Crown, and for so long a time no such inquiry has been held. In former days it was of regular periodical recurrence as often as the time came for a renewal of the Company's charter. The need for it has been now recognized. The Commission for which the Congress asks was mentioned in the Queen's speech, and, since Mr. Gladstone has signified his strong approval of it, we may expect that it will be issued whatever political party may be in power. It is a matter of course that the people of India will be represented upon it, and that all available evidence will be taken to guide the Commissioners to a judgment upon the whole case. How far the results of the inquiry will

correspond with the hopes of the Congress is a wholly different question. The delegates have sketched in advance a scheme of reforms or changes which they wish to see carried into effect. First and foremost, and as a necessary preliminary to all other reforms, the Indian Council is to be abolished, and its place to be taken by a Standing Committee of the House of Commons. In India itself the Supreme Legislative Council and the several Provincial Councils are to be expanded by the admission of a considerable number of elected members. Thus reformed, they are to have a necessary voice on all questions of finance, and a right to interpellate the executive on all points of administration. If protests are raised and overruled, the protesting members are to have a right of appeal to the Standing Committee by which the present Indian Council is to be replaced. Changes are next proposed in the rules for the examinations of candidates for the Indian Civil Service. The Congress asks, *inter alia*, that these examinations should be held in England and in India simultaneously and that the admissible age of competing candidates should be 23 at least. As regards finance, the Congress holds that the increased and, as it believes, the needless demands for more military expenditure are most properly to be met by retrenchment in other branches. But if this is not done, and if more money must be raised, the Congress looks in the first place to a re imposition of the customs duty, and secondly the extension of the licence tax. This second demand has been granted. The Income Tax Bill was passed after a short debate, in the course of which the various restricting amendments proposed to it were lost. The final demand of the Congress that Great Britain should extend a guarantee to the Indian debt has not been granted in terms, and is not likely to be. But while the English rule exists in India, there is enough of a practical guarantee to give absolute safety to the bond-holders. The Congress is further prepared to offer advice on the Burmese question. Its objection to the annexation of Upper Burmah comes a little too late. Its claim that all Burmah should in any case be separated from India and should be constituted a Crown colony includes matter on which it has an imperfect

right to speak. The separation of Burmah and the consequent loss of the Burmah surplus revenue it is for England rather than for India to determine. The approaching visit of the Indian Viceroy to Mandalay will put him in a position to give advice on this matter.

The first question which this series of resolutions will suggest is whether India is ripe for the transformation which they involve. If this can be answered in the affirmative, the days of English rule are numbered. If India can govern itself, our stay in the country is no longer called for. All we have to do is to preside over the construction of the new system and then to leave it to work. The lawyers and school-masters and newspaper editors will step into the vacant place and will conduct affairs with no help from us. Those who know India best will be the first to recognize the absurd impracticability of such a change. But it is to nothing less than this that the resolutions of the Congress point. If they were carried out, the result would soon be that very little would remain to England except the liability which we should have assumed for the entire Indian debt. Then, however, would be the time at which the representative character of the late Congress would be subjected to a crucial test. Our correspondent tells us that the delegates fairly represent the education and intellectual power of India. That they can talk, and that they can write, we are in no doubt at all. The whole business of their lives has been a training for such work as this, but that they can govern wisely, or that they can enforce submission to their rule, wise or unwise, we are not equally sure. That the entire Mahomedan population of India has steadily refused to have anything to do with them is a sufficiently ominous fact. Even if the proposed changes were to stop short of the goal to which they obviously tend, they would certainly serve to weaken the vigour of the Executive and to make the good government of the country a more difficult business than it has ever been. The Viceroy's Council already includes some nominated native members. To throw it open to elected members, and to give minorities a statutable right to be heard

before a Parliamentary Committee, would be an introduction of Home Rule for India in about as troublesome a form as could be devised. Do what we will the Government of India cannot be made constitutional. If it works well, neither England nor India can have any reason to be dissatisfied with it. The educated classes may find fault with their exclusion from full political rights. Political privileges they can obtain in the degree in which they prove themselves deserving of them. But it was by force that India was won, and it is by force that India must be governed, in whatever hands the Government of the country may be vested. If we were to withdraw, it would be in favour not of the most fluent tongue or of the most ready pen, but the strongest arm and the sharpest sword. It would, perhaps, be well for the members of the late Congress to reconsider their position from this practical point of view.

### III\*

To

The Editor of "The Times".

Sir,

The letter of your Bombay Correspondent, dated 31st December last, regarding the Indian National Congress, together with your editorial article based upon it, has been read here with much interest. The members of the Congress have not much reason to complain of the account of their work given by your correspondent, and they must feel grateful to you for the amount of sympathy manifested in your remarks upon it. At the same time it seems probable that some of the conclusions arrived at in your article would have been modified, if some further details of the proceedings of the Congress had been brought to your notice. As one of the Secretaries of the Congress, therefore, and with the approval of the

\*Letter of Justice K.T. Telang touching the remarks made about the Congress and Mohammedan community and importance of social reform.

President, I beg to send you some particulars regarding two important points made in your article.

The first point is in reference to your remark that the Mahomedans of India were conspicuous by their absence at the Congress. Although it must be admitted that the Mahomedan community was not adequately represented at our meeting, your remark is not altogether an accurate one. Two leading Mahomedan gentlemen did attend the Congress, viz., Mr. R.M. Sayani and Mr. A.M. Dharamsi. Both of these gentlemen are graduates of the University and attorneys of standing at the High Court of Bombay. Mr. Sayani held the office of Sheriff of Bombay last year; was a member of the Khoja Law Commission appointed by Government some years ago; and has for many years past been a member of the Municipal Corporation and Town Council of Bombay. Mr. Dharamsi, also, is a member of the Municipal Corporation of Bombay. Further, the Hon. Mr. Badroodin Tyabji, a member of the Legislative Council at Bombay, and Mr. Cumroodin Tyabji would have attended the Congress, had they not been absent from Bombay at the time the Congress was sitting. Mr. Badroodin is Chairman of the Managing Committee and Mr. Cumroodin one of the vice-presidents of the Bombay Presidency Association, which, in concert with the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, convened the Congress. As regards the other provinces, causes similar to the above indicated must doubtless have operated with greater force. And it must be remembered that this Congress was the first of its kind, naturally, therefore, there were some shortcomings. But we feel confident that next year, when the assemblage will be at Calcutta, the Mahomedan community will be represented as it befits its numbers and importance. The second point relates to the omission of social reform from the proceedings of the Congress. As regards this, it is to be observed that the main object of the Congress was a political one. But when the programme of business was informally discussed by the members, they decided that after the subjects for which they had specially assembled were disposed of, questions of social



reform should be considered if there was time. As it happened there was no time to do this, because several of our members were obliged to leave for their respective homes on the third day of our meeting. But on that day a very earnest social reformer, Divan Bahadur Raghunath Rao of Madras, gave an eloquent address on social questions, and he was followed by another eminent reformer, the Hon. M.G. Ranade, of this Presidency. You will probably consider that the importance of social reform is even more powerfully recognised when it is eagerly discussed by persons avowedly assembled for another purpose than when it is taken up in ordinary course as part of a formal programme. I hope you will give insertion to this in your journal.

High Court, Bombay :  
9th March, 1886.

I am, etc.  
K.T. Telang

### *The Second Congress (1886)*

The second session of the Indian National Congress held at Calcutta in December, 1886 marked a distinct improvement upon the event of the last year. According to the official report, "the first Congress was composed of Volunteers, the second of Delegates". It shows that the Congress "had captured the heart as well as the brain of India".\* The statistical data shows that 500 delegates were elected, of whom 434 actually registered their names and credentials as present, and it is thought that some left without doing so—230 from Bengal, 74 from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, 47 from Bombay, 47 from Madras, and 17 from the Punjab. It was enough to show that it was the Congress of the whole country. It is well observed : "The Congress of 1885 had been got together with some difficulty by the exertions of a few leading reformers, and included less than one hundred of the more advanced thinkers belonging to the prominent centres of political activity. The Congress of 1886 may be said to have

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\*Mrs. Annie Besant : *How India Wrought for Freedom*, p. 15.

grown, almost spontaneously, out of the unanimous resolve of the educated and semi-educated classes, throughout the Empire to take a decisive step towards the attainment of that political enfranchisement to which they have come, of late years, to attach so much importance. In all the more advanced provinces action commenced early in the autumn, and it very soon became apparent that the second Congress was destined to be, in many essential respects, a decided advance on the first.

“The delegates or representatives who attended the first Congress, though representatives of the highest culture of the land, and fully qualified to speak as the wants and wishes of the nation, yet appeared as volunteers in the good cause, uncommissioned, as a rule, by any constituencies, local or general, to appear on their behalf. Very early it seems to have occurred simultaneously to all those most interested in the renewed movement that something more than this was requisite, and that the gentlemen who were to take part in the second Congress ought to receive some public authorisation from the bodies and communities (or leading members of the latter) whom they were to represent. Accordingly, as the time of the Congress drew near, the leading Associations at all the more important towns and cities proceeded to elect delegates, and great public meetings, embracing all classes of the community, who were in any way interested in the matter were also held, almost throughout the country, at which representatives were designated .....

“But the greatest advance lay, perhaps in the total change in the character of the Congress. In the previous year the people had to be pressed and entreated to come; to the late Congress everybody wanted to come of their own accord. The first Congress was created by the labour of a few who had to nurse carefully the young plant; the second Congress burst into vigorous growth on its own account, with a luxuriance that demanded careful pruning.....For the first Congress there was no enthusiasm until after it was over (though then

indeed the entire country endorsed these results and warmly approved the new departure) but, in regard to the second Congress, the greatest enthusiasm prevailed, especially throughout Bengal.....Nor was this all : at many places, large crowds accompanied the delegates to the ship or railway stations, on their departure for the Congress, giving them ovations, as if they were great conquerors returning laden with the spoils of victory, rather than humble soldiers, departing to share in one of the little preliminary skirmishes of Freedom's great battle".\*

Dadabhai Naoroji was chosen as President for this session and he delivered his address after Dr. Rajendralal Mitra delivered the welcome address.

### **A POWERFUL APPEAL FOR MODERATION\*\***

Gentlemen,—The duty I have to perform on the present occasion is to receive the delegates who have come from the various Provinces of the Empire to take part in our deliberations. It is a very agreeable duty, and I most heartily welcome the gentlemen to this assemblage. In the name of my colleagues who have organized this Congress, I express my welcome to them. In the name of the citizens of Calcutta, I beg to tender them our most cordial greetings. I receive them with my extended hands ; I offer them the right hand of fellowship for the cordial manner in which they have responded to our invitation. It is not for me on the present occasion to dwell at length upon the subjects which will be brought forward for consideration here. But I cannot rest content with the few words I have already said. It has been the dream of my life that the scattered units of my race may some day coalesce and come together : that instead of living merely as individuals, we may some day so combine as to be able to live as a nation. In this meeting, I behold the commencement of such coalescence. I hope the union will not be very distant. It may not

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\**Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Bombay, 1958, Vol. II, pp. 24-25.

\*\*Address delivered by Dr. Rajendralal Mitra, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Calcutta Congress held in December, 1886.

be left to me to realize the sight, but it is highly gratifying to me that we are here assembled together, delegates from the North and from the South, from the East and from the West, all anxious to join as members of one nation for the good of our country. Addressing those of my own race, I can tell you that there was a time when our forefathers lived as one single race. Circumstances led to their dispersion, and parochial hedges of various kind kept them apart. It is therefore not a matter of small rejoicing that we should have surmounted those difficulties and come together. The Aryan blood that courses in my veins is the same which vivifies you, and as blood is thicker than water, I take the highest delight in being able to welcome my long separated brethren. Pardon me gentlemen, if in the exuberance of my emotion I have forgotten for one moment only the Muslim gentlemen who have graced this meeting with their presence.

They are as much welcome as the people of my own race, I welcome them with all my heart, and I look upon their presence here to day as a guarantee of this being truly a National Congress. Without them we might have felt that we were at a marriage party without the bride. Diverse we are in origin, in religion, in language, and in our manners and customs, but we are not the less members of the same nation. We live in the same country, we are subjects of the same sovereign, and our good and evil depend, entirely on the state of the Government and the laws passed in this country. Whatever is beneficial to the Hindus is equally beneficial to the Mohammedans, and whatever is injurious to the Hindus is equally injurious to the followers of Mohamed. Nations are not made of sects but of tribes bound together in one political bond. We are all bound by the same political bond, and therefore we constitute one nation. I behold in the Congress the dawn of a better and a happier day for India. I look upon it as the quickening of new life. For long, our fathers lived and we have lived as individuals only, or as families, but henceforward I hope we shall be living as a nation, united one and all to promote our welfare and the welfare of our mother country. That is the great object of this Congress, and if you bear that in mind, I

am sure there will be no difference of opinion as to the propriety of our receiving each other in brotherly love and trying our best to secure the utmost union possible. It would be absurd to suppose that we can for one moment secure perfect union. We know that Jesus Christ failed to secure perfect union in the body of his disciples, and out of 250 millions of people, you must find that we have many more than the disciple who is opposed to us.

There has been a good deal written lately about the impropriety of this Congress, about the injustice we do to the Government by holding these meetings. (Here Mr. A O. Hume entered the Hall amidst loud and deafening applause). I shall not stop to refer to the scandalous and absurd charges which have been hurled against us about our being a discontented people, a band of wire-pullers and professional agitators. I would not say one word against those who complain of our being disloyal ; for such charges are beneath contempt. But there are others who are more moderate in their tone and in the charges they bring against us and therefore are more injurious in their action. For instance, we have been told that we are trying to force the hand of Government. What is meant by that, I must confess, I do not clearly understand. As an oldman, it has been my habit occasionally to cut in for a hand at whist. I know that in this position it is an object with the players to force the hand of their opponents. But are we really forcing the hand of our opponent, the Government ? Do we really look upon the Government as an opponent ? It is understood in the game that my opponent has some card, some honour, some trumps, which he is not at all disposed to let me know. Has the Government any such thing ? Does the Government desire that there should be something kept secret and away from the public, and which we are trying to force the Government to disclose ? No. Those who say so libel the Government.

It is altogether wrong to suppose that the Government is holding anything away from us ; and we cannot try therefore

to force the hands of the Government when they contain nothing that would not be given to us freely. Again, we have been told, we must have a policy of confidence in the Government. I would say at once, away with such nonsense. I will never have a policy of confidence. A policy of confidence implies the simulation of a merit which we do not possess ; it is the simulation of a feeling which we do not really feel. If we really have confidence in the Government, we need not adopt any policy or semblance of it. We have perfect confidence in the Government, and therefore it is absurd to talk of 'adopting a policy of confidence'. Let those who have no confidence in the Government, but who have their own purposes to serve, say they have 'policy of confidence'. We shall have none of it.

We have again been told that the Government should not be obliged to precipitate their action ; that they have already adopted a resolution for enquiry, and that we should not oblige them to come to a conclusion without such enquiry. But are we doing so ? Do you for a moment believe that by assembling here to-day and taking into consideration all those subjects which concern us most, we are forestalling the decision of the Government ? The Government has itself said that the Public Service Commission is of a judicial character, and that the whole business depends on the evidence produced before it ; who is to produce the evidence for the whole people of the country if the men of light and leading, who are our leaders in every respect, should keep away and be prevented from joining together and deliberating in the manner in which they can put forth the most reliable evidence ? We are only preparing the evidence, and not forestalling the action of the Government. If you were to say, as they have said, that we force resolutions instead of allowing time for consideration, the same may be said of those gentlemen of the long robe who take up so much of the time of our judges in discussing matters before the judges have made up their minds. There is no pretence whatever to say we have not the utmost confidence in the judges of the High Court, and the other great

Courts of the country. We all have the utmost confidence in the judges.

Still we deem it necessary for the interest of our cause, that we should employ the gentlemen of the long robe to explain matters to the judges, we desire that our cases shall be put rightly before them. This is an analogous case, and we want our delegates of mature judgement to consider the evidence and put it in ship-shape, so that it may be laid before the Government with perfect confidence of success, and may enable the Government to see through our cause much better. If it be true that the Government is superseded, by such action, the same may be said of the judges, and the consequence would be that if the gentlemen of the long robe insisted on not interfering with the discretion of the judges during trial, they would very soon find their green bags to be empty. There are some other charges made, but they are all of the same stamp, and I shall not take up your time by dwelling on them, for I must leave ample time to my successor to deliver his inaugural address. I will, however, in this connection tell you a thing which occurred to me two years ago. As President of the British Indian Association, I took a deep interest in organizing the opposition to the Bengal Tenancy Bill, and I asked a Hindu gentleman,—I am particular to say a Hindu gentleman,—to join the opposition. He said, no, he would not. And why so? 'Because my Collector won't like it.' 'But what do you care about your Collector; your interests are involved?' 'But you require a subscription from me, and if I join you, I shall lose my money and I shall lose the good graces of my Collector. You will not lose your case, because I keep back; if you win, I shall derive the full benefit and I shall retain the friendship of the Collector and my money; if you lose, you lose all, but I shall still have the benefit of the Collector's good graces and my money.' Is there anything like this feeling somewhere which makes people keep away from this conference? It is not for me to attribute motives, but I found that in one case, and it is not out of my way to bring it to the notice of the Congress.

The subjects which you will have to consider are so varied and so diverse in character, and they will be expatiated upon so fully by my friend who will soon occupy this chair, that I shall not take up time by going through them *seriatim*. The most important of them is the reconstitution of the Legislative Councils. I look upon that as the corner-stone of all the topics of political condition. Nothing can be done, nothing will be advantageous, as long as our legislatures are in their present condition. All other things dwindle into very little, when you place beside them this primary consideration, the reconstitution and reformation of the Legislative Councils. Nor is this a matter in which we have for the first time conceived any idea. Time was when our laws were passed in camera, in the Council Chamber with closed doors, and when nobody knew anything of how our laws were fashioned, until they were read, passed, and published in the Gazette. The Government itself felt that that was not a very fair way of doing business. The Government itself wanted co-operation from without, and the first step taken was to appoint a native gentlemen of vast experience and illimitable judicial lore to lend his aid to the maturing of bills.

This was, however, a very poor substitute for better representation ; it was a procedure which was felt to be utterly worthless, and in a few years it was set aside. The Councils' Act under which we now live is a great improvement on the past. It has given you several persons in the Council instead of only one adviser, but the evil arose from the several persons who were appointed not being representatives of anybody but themselves ; they represented no 'one but their own good interests ; they were selected, I will not say how or with what motive, but we know that they were selected so as to produce more ornament than usefulness. We have heard with reference to ladies what Mrs. Grundy sometimes calls heaps of millinery, and we had several such ; there were others who acted with perfection as dummies ; others who had taken up the role of *ap ke waste's*. But whether as *ap ke wastes*, as dummies, or as heaps of millinery, they were just the men not wanted. When



I say this, I must not forget that there were some who were my personal friends, and better men India did not produce. But they were few. They were not able to cope with the overwhelming dead weight of the official majority that rested upon them, and their usefulness was minimised. If by the action of Government at three different stages you see that it has been felt expedient to alter the constitution of the Councils for the preparation of our laws, there is nothing disloyal or improper if we once more say 'let us take another step forward'.

The goal may not be reached for some time, but our grand children might come to it. At present, we want only one step forward : for nomination by the authorities, nomination in any case of an irresponsible character, we want election by those whom the elected are to represent. This is the primary object of our agitation with regard to the Legislative Councils. Let the representatives be elected. Let the system be whatever the Government in its wisdom may think proper, but let the policy be a policy of representation, and let there be a sufficient number of representatives to make the feelings and wants of the people fully heard by the Government. We live not under a National Government, we live under a foreign bureaucracy ; our foreign rulers under the peculiar circumstances of the case are foreigners by birth, religion, language, habits—everything that divides humanity into different sections. They cannot possibly dive into our hearts ; they cannot ascertain our wants and feelings and aspirations. It is impossible for them to do so. They may try their best, and I have no reason to doubt that many of our Governors have tried hard to ascertain our feelings and our wants ; but owing to their peculiar position, they have failed to ascertain them. Therefore, what we want is to have a sufficient number of men to represent the people each bringing his quota of knowledge of the requirements of a particular section of the community. Perhaps it is not for this Congress to decide the number of such representatives ; it would be for the Government to decide. But this much is clear, that in all honesty we do want a much larger number than at present.

There is one point in connection with the Legislative Councils which I must not forget, and that is the right of interpellation. At present, owing to the peculiar circumstances of the Government, there is no interchange of opinion, each party having the right to express its views. We have thus to make our guesses as to what others think and many Acts which are most useful in their way, many orders of an administrative kind which are most necessary and judicious, are announced in the pages of the Gazette without a single word of explanation, and the people cannot help doubting the good faith of those who pass them. A single question in the Council Chamber would at once explain the matter ; and therefore we think that as a matter of justice it is extremely important that whatever be the constitution of the Councils, we should have the right of interpellation.

With regard to the other subjects before the Congress there is one only to which I shall refer, and that is the Public Service question. It is not so important, not nearly so vitally important, as the question of the reconstitution of the Councils, it is rather a narrow question and has a bad stamp on its face, an anxiety on our part to get the loaves and fishes ; but still it is a very important question ; because, without taking into account the money point of view, the nationals have a right to demand that they shall have the privilege of serving their own country. This is a right inalienable from the people in all other parts of the world. It has been conceded even by the Czar of Russia, and I hold that keeping it away from us is a grave injustice. That this deprivation should be done away with is a matter which should occupy your foremost attention. True, it may be said that at present the people can go to England and enter into the Civil Service, but it is such a mockery that the man who tells it is either joking with me or actually insulting me. The question, is that we should send our children, at the age of 16, five thousand miles away for three years together for the purpose of passing an examination of the strictest possible kind. The odds are against them, the prizes are few, and the blanks numerous, and the risk of

sojourn by youths without guardians in a large metropolis, teeming with temptation, are most serious. As a matter of fact, several Indian youths have returned from England as raving maniacs. Parents must be foolhardy indeed who, in the face of these facts will, venture to send their children to England at the age of 16. But suppose the age is raised by two years, would that satisfy all your demand? I say, any. For the service of one's country, in no part of the world is a person called away from his native land to pass an examination. Canada is under the British Government. But Her Majesty the Queen-Empress does not require that every French subject there shall go to England to pass an examination before being admitted into the Canadian service. Nothing of the kind is required in the Cape Colonies, nor in Australia, nor in Ceylon. And what is true of them is true of any other country which is a foreign dependency. Why should then the case be different in India alone? The rule here is that no man should be allowed to serve the country without running the great risks which await them in England, without having to expatriate himself for three years, and come home to be excluded from caste. This is great grievance too and it is one regarding which every Hindu and every Mohammedan gentleman has a right to make a strong protest. I do not deny for a moment that there are advantages in going to England, intellectual and moral, of a very high order, and I would be the last to put an embargo on any one going to England. But I hold that it should not be made *a sine qua non* for appointment under the Government. It is just as bad as the Czar's mandate which will allow no man to become a high officer unless a Mohammedan Ali Khan changes his name to Alikhanoff. Our Sovereign, Her Gracious Majesty the Empress, would be the last to show that she is in this respect on a par with the Czar of Russia, and I hope therefore that those who will take the subject into consideration will not lose sight of this important point.

I shall say nothing further with regard to the subjects which will come before you, and I shall close by simply urging that

whatever you do and say, and whatever policy you mature, bear in mind that of all things moderation is of the utmost importance. Let your speakers speak moderately ; let your schemes be moderate ; and let your resolutions be so framed that no Government can have any occasion to complain of want of moderation. That is what I am particularly anxious to ensure, and I hope your Committee and your Congressmen will bear this fact prominently in mind.

I shall say nothing more, but repeat our welcome to the gentlemen here assembled and leave the matter to your consideration.

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On this occasion 15 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I offered dutiful and loyal congratulations to Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen-Empress Victoria on the approaching completion of the first half century of her memorable, beneficent, and glorious reign, and heartily wished her many, many more years of rule over the great British Empire. Resolution II desired eradication of the poverty of the Indian people. Resolution III reiterated the demand for representative institutions in India. Resolution IV has its own importance in this connection that dealt with the demand for representative institutions in detail. It said :

“Resolved that this Congress is of opinion that in giving practical effect to this essential reform, regard should be had (subject to such modifications as, on a more detailed examination of the question, may commend themselves to the Government) to the principles embodied in the following tentative suggestions :

1. The number of persons comprising the Legislative Councils, both Provincial and of the Governor-General, to be materially increased. Not less than one-half the Members of such enlarged Councils to be elected. Not more than one-fourth to be officials having seats *ex-officio* in such Councils and not more than one-fourth to be Members, official or non-official, nominated by Government.

2. The right to elect Members to the Provincial Councils to be conferred only on those classes and members of the community, *prima facie* capable of exercising it wisely and independently. In Bengal and Bombay the Councillors may be elected by the Members of Municipalities, District Boards, Chambers of Commerce and the Universities, or an electorate may be constituted of all the persons possessing such qualifications, educational and pecuniary, as may be deemed necessary. In Madras, the Councillors may be elected either by District Boards, Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, and the University, or by Electoral Colleges composed of Members, partly elected by these bodies and partly nominated by Government. In the North-West Provinces and Oudh, and in the Punjab, Councillors may be elected by an Electoral College composed of Members elected by Municipal and District Boards, and nominated, to an extent not exceeding one-sixth of the total number, by Government, it being understood that the same elective system now in force where Municipal Boards are concerned will be applied to District Boards, and the right of electing members to these latter extended to the cultivating class. But whatever system be adopted (and the details must be worked out separately for each province) care must be taken that all sections of the community, and all great interests, are adequately represented.

3. The elected Members of the Council of the Governor-General for making laws to be elected by the Members of the several Provincial Councils.

4. No elected or nominated Member of any Council to receive any salary or remuneration in virtue of such Membership, but any such Member, already in receipt of any Government salary or allowance, to continue to draw the same unchanged during Membership, and all Members to be entitled to be reimbursed any expenses incurred in travelling in connection with their Membership.

5. All persons resident in India to be eligible for seats in Council, whether as electees or nominees, without distinction of race creed, caste, or colour.

6. All legislative measures and all financial questions, including all budgets, whether these involve new or enhanced taxation or not, to be necessarily submitted to and dealt with by these Councils. In the case of all other branches of the administration, any member to be at liberty, after due notice, to put any question he sees fit to the ex-officio Members (or such one of these as may be specially charged with the supervision of the particular branch concerned), and to be entitled, except as hereinafter provided, to receive a reply to his question, together with copies of any papers requisite for the thorough comprehension of the subject, and on this reply the Council to be at liberty to consider and discuss the question, and record thereon such resolution as may appear fitting to the majority. Provided that, if the subject in regard to which the inquiry is made involves matters of Foreign Policy, Military dispositions or strategy, or is otherwise of such a nature that, in the opinion of the Executive, the public interests would be materially imperilled by the communication of the information asked for, it shall be competent for them to intrust the ex-officio Members, or one of them, to reply accordingly, and decline to furnish the information asked for.

7. The Executive Government shall possess the power of overruling the decision arrived at by the majority of the Council in every case in which in its opinion, the public interests would suffer by the acceptance of such decision ; but whenever this power is exercised, a full exposition of the grounds on which this has been considered necessary shall be published within one month, and in the case of local Governments they shall report the circumstances and explain their action to the Government of India, and in the case of this latter, it shall report and explain to the Secretary of State ; and in any such case, on a representation made through the Government of India and the Secretary of State by the overruled majority, it shall be competent to the Standing Committee of the House of Commons (recommended in the 3rd Resolution of last year's Congress, which this present Congress has affirmed) to consider the matter, and call for any and all papers or infor-

mation, and hear any persons on behalf of such majority or otherwise, and thereafter, if needful, report thereon to the full House.”

Resolution V requested for the setting up of a Royal Commission to inquire exhaustively into the best method of introducing such a tentative form of representative institutions in India. Resolution VI said about the setting up of a Committee of distinguished gentlemen to consider and report on the Public Service Question. Resolution VII said about the approval and adoption of the Public Services Committee Report. Resolution VIII desired that the system of trial by jury be safely extended to many parts of the country where it was not then in force. Resolution IX desired that the innovation started in 1872 be withdrawn and that Sessions Judges and High Courts should not be empowered to set aside the verdict of the jury. Resolution X desired that Indian Code of Criminal Procedure be amended in a way that persons accused in the warrant cases could plead for committing their cases to the Court of Sessions. Resolution XI demanded separation of the Executive from the Judiciary. Resolution XIII pledged for assistance to Britain in the time of any crisis by introducing a system of volunteering for the Indian inhabitants of the country. Resolution XIII said that Standing Congress Committees be constituted in all important centres. Resolution XIV fixed the next session of the Congress at Madras on 27 December, 1887. Finally, Resolution XV said that the copies of all these resolutions be sent to the Viceroy, who be requested to send them to Her Majesty's Government in London.

### **CRITICAL COMMENTS OF THE ENGLISH AND ANGLO-INDIAN PRESS AND POWERFUL REJOINDERS OF THE CONGRESS\***

*The Times* (London) poured contempt upon the National Congress. It said that it was an unreal imitation of the

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\**Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. II, Chapter 2, pp. 24-43.

English Caucus and merely an affair of discontented place seekers, men of straw, with little or no stake in the country. It said : "A 'National Indian Congress', composed, it is said, of some three hundred delegates from all parts of the country, holds its first meeting in Calcutta today. It is organized, of course, upon the model of the societies which discuss social and political affairs in this country. Papers will be read, and debates will take place, while the necessary relief from that attractive but arduous labour will be found in excursions and evening parties. The subjects discussed are the representation of Natives in the Legislative Councils, the admission of Natives to more numerous and responsible posts in the Civil Service, and generally, the objections to British administration which naturally occur to persons of considerable imitative powers, of great fluency of speech, and of total ignorance of the real problems of Government and the means by which they have to be overcome in practice. The Mahomedan community appear to hold aloof from this kind of thing, on the ground that they prefer not to hamper the Government at a time when it is doing its best for the Natives of India. This incidentally shows what the real aims and results of the 'National Indian Congress' are considered to be by the Natives of India themselves ; at the same time, adding another to many proofs that we must look to our Mahomedan subjects for the most sensible and moderate estimate of our policy. These annual gatherings, held now in one great town and again in another, derive their significance from the fact that they represent a vast amount of continuous discussion by local societies. We have produced an extensive class of talkers, and equipped them with a great deal of second-hand knowledge of English history and literature. In every considerable town, these gentlemen form associations and discuss real or imaginary grievances with the confident dogmatism always displayed by people whose pet theories work in vacuo. Such a Congress as that which sat last year in Bombay, or is now sitting in Calcutta, is composed of delegates from all these talking clubs who focus the valuable results of their perennial activity. Thus we have to deal with public opinion of a kind,



but it is important to remember that it is the public opinion of a class whose aims and interests are not by any means identical with those of the great masses of the Indian populations for whom we have to care. It is a highly vocal class, which can repeat all the common places of English political life with extraordinary facility, but which has very little stock-in-trade besides that aptitude. Such a class has only two congenial occupations after supplying a certain limited number of busy doctors and lawyers—one is to seek employment under Government, and the other to abuse the Government which does not give it employment enough. These societies and the newspapers they control represent a very trifling percentage of the people of India ; it is much less certain than they probably imagine that their success would prove a benefit to any section of the Indian people except themselves”.

The authors of the Congress Report, therefore, countered such remarks by strongly reacting in these words : “Therefore we utterly deprecate the introduction of any religious sentiment, or any reference to gentlemen’s religious beliefs into political movements of the nature of these Congresses, and on the present occasion should have considered it sufficient merely to record that Hindus, Mahomedans, Sikhs, Christians, Brahmos and Parsees took part in the Conference.

“But unfortunately an effort has been made to detract from the national character of the late assemblage, by pointing out that numerically, according to the proportion observable in the population, the Mahomedans were inadequately represented ; which is just as if the nationality of the House of Commons in England were denied, because it contained a smaller proportion than the population of Great Britain as a whole, of Methodists or Roman Catholics. Of course as every one knows, even in Ireland, where the religious antagonism of Protestants and Roman Catholics far exceeds that anywhere existing in India between Mahomedans and Hindus, a Protestant like Mr. Parnell represents a Catholic constituency.

This short-sighted action has not commended itself to the Mahomedans of India as a body.\* Mahomedan speakers at the Congress, one after the other, denounced it as unjustifiable and unpatriotic, and declared that Mahomedans and Hindus, have their interests identical. Even in Calcutta itself, a certain reaction has taken place, and some, of the Mahomedans feel and admit that a mistake had been made".

A prominent Muslim figure, Sheikh Reza Hussain, expressed his veiws thus :

"Gentlemen, I thank you heartily for having taken the trouble to come to this city (Lucknow) after your recent deliberations at Calcutta. I welcome you, gentlemen of Bellary, from the bottom of my heart to this ancient capital. If political Congresses are not likely, as some Anglo-Indian friends allege, to end in anything great, they have done so much at least, that to-day we find the nobility and gentry of Lucknow welcoming the inhabitants of other parts of the country. Gentlemen, I have read in the papers that, some, apparently very narrow minded men, call this Congress a Hindu Congress. But I will not resume my seat to-day without denying this unfounded allegation. I do not think that the Mahomedans, who have kept aloof, are all absolutely devoid of reason, but it seems to me that their actions have rather been the result of prejudice and selfishness than of principle and reason (Loud cheers), It is a calumny to say that Mahomedans have no sympathy with this great national movement. In every community there are some gentlemen of fault-finding tendencies, and when these gentlemen found that they had no other way of justifying their conduct, they took upon themselves to misrepresent the objects of the Congress.

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\*Take, for instance, the speech of Sheikh Reza Hossain (a gentleman who is not to be confounded with Nawab Reza Ali Khan), the President of the Rifa-i-am (the most important Association in Upper India), on the occasion of the visit, on their tour through the N.W. Provinces, of certain of the Madras delegates, a few days after the close of the Congress.

But, as in every other case, truth prevailed, and all attempts to discredit the promoters of the good movement have been laid bare. I tell you, gentlemen here present, that the Mahomedans have full sympathy with the Congress. If need were, I could take upon myself to furnish the signatures of 50,000 Mahomedans (loud cheers) in support of my assertion. In the by-gone days of Mahomedan power, though the great sections of the Indian community differed in respect of religion and customs, the Hindus never lacked in their fidelity towards the ruling powers ; and, in return, the Mahomedans took them into their confidence, and gave them a share in the administration of their country (Hear, hear). In my opinion no country can prosper in which there is not a national unity. We may differ in religious views, but in our aspirations I hold that we are one. We have a common goal before us ; and in every other respect, we are, in reality, one nation. When, unfortunately there is any famine or plague or misfortune among us, there is no distinction made between the various communities. So, in respect of laws, should they all be treated alike. This national demonstration has shown, to a great extent, the moderation of our demands. It has clearly shown that these demands are not the demands of a handful of interested and self-seeking agitators. Nobody can raise any question as to the representative character of the meeting, which numbered among its delegates the greatest and best of our patriots—men who are not for doing away with law and order, but who are actuated by the purest of principles. In honoring such men all Hindus and Mahomedans ought to be, and I believe, are united”.

The Nawab Reza Ali Khan of Lucknow, speaking in Urdu, seconded Baboo Joykissen’s nomination of Mr. Dadabhai as President, Calcutta 1886 and proceeded indignantly and eloquently to deny that the Mahomedans were holding aloof from, or lacked sympathy with, the Congress, concluding his speech amidst vociferous cheering with the following words : “The Association that has done us the honour of deputing us is largely composed of leading Mahomedans, Nawabs,

Wasekadars, Political Pensioners, and scions of the once Royal House of Oudh, and I assure you that our Association and my brother Mahomedans, generally, of Oudh, will utterly repudiate and condemn any unworthy attempt to create dissensions in our ranks, by unfounded statements as to our supposed want of sympathy with the present movement. Hindus or Mahomedans, Parsees or Sikhs, we are one people now, whatever our ancestors six or eight hundred years ago may have been, and our public interests are indivisible and identical. Gentlemen, I pray you disregard any such slanders ; we Mahomedans (at least such of us as can think at all) think just as all thinking Hindus do on these public questions, and believe me when I say that you will ever find us side by side with you in every legal constitutional endeavour to raise the political status of the people of our common home and country”.

The official reporters of the Congress further said : “The refusal of the National Mahomedan Association and of the Mahomedan Literary Society—represented respectively by Mr. Amir Ali and the Nawab Abdul Latiff—to take part in the National Congress now assembled in this city does not, we are assured, command the sympathy or approval of the Mahomedan community generally, who have certainly a right to ask what steps were taken by these gentlemen to ascertain the views of the community, in writing these letters. The Mahomedan community at Madras have sent delegates to the Congress, and so have the Mahomedans of Bombay, the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and the chief towns and cities of Bengal, and before taking so serious a step as that which Mr. Amir Ali and the Nawab have taken, they will themselves allow, we think, that they ought to have ascertained, beyond doubt, that the community which they are supposed to represent, desired them to take such action. We are not able to affirm that they did not take it, but there is, we fear a strong presumption against their having done so. It is strong testimony to the character of the local Native Press that the subject has been dealt with in a spirit of extreme moderation, unusual in the public Press, and

this moderation is of itself a most forcible reply to the charges that are so unjustly and commonly brought against our Native contemporaries. Let them but continue to show this self-command, and no one will be able, or even desire to resist their representations and demands. The letters must have been a sharp trial to many of them, and the perfect self-command they have shown in their comments thereon is an honourable fact upon which we congratulate them very sincerely."

In equally forceful words N.G. Chandravarkar\* observed : "The second National Congress of India has come and gone, and it has been by all who either witnessed it in Calcutta or watched its proceedings from elsewhere declared a success. The general verdict seems to be that it passed off admirably well. Before it came off I confess I had serious misgivings about it. The attempt of the Hon. Mr. Amir Ali and Nawab Abdul Latiff Khan to keep the Mahomedans away from it threatened at first sight to mar its success. Indeed, when Mahomedan delegates arrived from other parts of India they were got at and asked not to put in their appearance at the Congress. "The Hindus are ahead of us. We are lagging behind them. We still want the patronage of Government and shall gain nothing by joining them." This was, I understand, the plea urged for the conversion of our Mahomedan colleagues, but, to their credit be it said, like good men and true, they stood firmly by their cherished conviction that the best policy was to make common cause with the Hindus and Parsees. They regularly attended the meetings ; watched the proceedings as closely as the other delegates ; and in their speeches showed an amount of good will and confidence which might well afford an example to others. That feeling of theirs was duly reciprocated by delegates representing other sections of the community ; and thus our misgiving on this head proved fortunately false. The second thing that contributed to the success of the Congress was the behaviour of the Bengal delegates. Some

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\*He presided over the Congress session held at Lahore in 1900.

one—he was from Bengal itself—it appears had dined into their cars, before the arrival of the delegates in Calcutta, his view that Bengalis had obtained in other parts of India a bad reputation for hospitality to strangers. But our Bengal friends surprised their delegate-guests by the splendid arrangements they had made for their reception. Every one seemed to be anxious that the delegates from other parts should return pleased with Calcutta and its people. One might well, looking to the harmony which characterised the proceedings throughout, and the tone of loyalty and moderation which marked all speeches, adopt for the Congress that has just passed away old Richard Baxter's motto : "In all things essential, union ; in things non-essential, liberty ; and in all things, charity."

Thus, the author of the official report could confidently assert : "And now arises the question—of what practical use is all this demonstration ? Politically, some say, Congresses and their resolutions will carry no weight. Government, it is said, regard them as emanating from the educated minority of Natives of India. But no one amongst us is, I believe, so foolishly sanguine as to suppose that when we have met, spoken, and passed resolutions, we have done all. The Congress may, or may not, have the desired effect on the Government. The Government may or may not give wholly or partially what we have asked. It may not be national in the sense that the masses are still unable to sympathise fully with its political demands. These seem to me to be secondary questions altogether, and the highest value of the Congress seems to me to lie in this, that, quite apart from the fact that it is at present political force, it is a great social lever. It is national at all events in the sense that it is calculated to form us into a nation, by bringing us together, and making us by an interchange of views think, feel, and act alike. I care not whether the array of resolutions we have passed in the past and may pass in future are attended to or not by the Government as long as these Congress meetings develop the bond of union among the people. All things else are subsidiary, and its gain is not so much in the present as in the future.

The charge has been brought against the Congress, however, that while dealing boldly with political questions it quietly ignored the equally, if not more, important question of social reform. It is indeed, to be regretted that social questions, on which the future of the country so greatly depends, should have been regarded as beyond the sphere of the Congress politics. But I do not think we can say that they were altogether ignored. Many of the delegates, I can say from my own personal knowledge, felt strongly on them, and had the question been formally placed before the Congress, I doubt not the advocates of social reform would have found a good number on their side. There were many practical reformers among the delegates ; there were others who sympathised with Mr. Malabari's agitation. We all agreed that our primary object was union ; that questions on which all felt alike ought alone to be taken up by the Congress ; and by following such a course alone could we hope to unite all and make them see the necessity of social reform. The idea, therefore, of formally discussing the question was dropped. But that did not prevent us from taking it up informally."

### *The Third Session (1887)*

This session opened at Madras on 27 December, 1887. It marked further improvement upon what had happened at the Calcutta session a year back. As early as in May, 1887 a strong and broad-based Reception Committee consisting of 120 members was constituted with Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao as its Chairman. It embraced Hindus of all castes, Muslims, Indian Christians and Eurasians and, as such, it, in the words of Mrs. Annie Besant, was a thoroughly representative body. Every town of the country of over 10,000 inhabitants was requested to form a sub-committee and a vigorous political propaganda was carried on. It did creditable work. From different parts of the country 760 delegates were elected, though 607 could attend it—362 from Madras, 99 from Bombay and Sindh, 79 from Bengal, Orissa and Assam, 45 from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, 13 from the Central Provinces,

and 9 from the Punjab. Sir T. Madhava Rao read out the welcome address in the course of which he hailed the patronage of the British Government and, speaking of the Indian National Congress, declared that it was "the soundest triumph of British Administration, and a Crown of Glory to the British Nation." Such an expression recalled the glorious words of Lord T.B. Macaulay that the noblest monument of British Rule in India would be the establishment of Britain's free institutions in this country. W.C. Bonnerjee proposed the name of Badruddin Tyabji for the presidentship and it was seconded by S. Subramaniya Aiyer. It boldly demonstrated the fact that from the beginning the Indian National Congress was a secular organisation.

### **CALL FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL STRUGGLE\***

Gentlemen, it is a matter of sincere congratulation that this city has been chosen for the meeting of the Congress this year : you may well imagine that Madras ardently coveted the honour which the sister cities of Bombay and Calcutta have already enjoyed.

Many of you have come down from very distant parts of the empire. We hope that your stay here will be comfortable, pleasant and interesting, and that when you have returned home you will retain a kindly remembrance of your brethren in this far-off part of India. It may be that we cannot compete with our Bombay brethren in the kindly care and the generous hospitality with which gentlemen from this part of the country were received at the first Congress. It may also be that we must despair of being able to imitate the princely character of the reception which was accorded to those who attended the second Congress, in the 'city of palaces.' But if you are prepared to take the will for the deed,—as I trust you are,—you may rest assured that we gather you to our bosom with hearts as sympathetic as they are proud.

\*Address delivered by Sir T. Madhava Rao, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Madras Congress held in December, 1887.



That we should rejoice with pride to receive you, and that you should kindly consent to be our honoured guests is, gentlemen, I think, quite natural when we take into account the forces which have been at work among us, and the environment with which we have been surrounded by the wisdom, justice, and generosity of the British nation. Contact with such a nation is like the contact of iron with the magnet. It has the inevitable effect of the nation operated upon being, by insensible degrees, assimilated to the dominant type. Let cavillers at this view show me the people who, having been taught the lessons of liberty and enlightened statesmanship, did not, in due time, thirst for the blessings of freedom and good government. Let them show me the community which, having been brought within the sphere of liberal education, did not wish and strive to secure a status consistent with such culture and necessitated by such discipline. Let them show me the land which is covered with a net-work of railways, spanned by telegraphic lines, and studded with post-offices, but which is not characterised by the dropped off, like autumn leaves, of local prejudices and home-bred idiosyncrasies. Such a people and such a land can exist only in the reveries of a wild imagination,—at any rate, I cannot bring myself to believe that they could exist within the pale of that empire which have been beautifully described as the empire on which the sun never sets.

To a multitude of factors such as these the Indian community has been subjected for over four score years ; and who can wonder that local differences are getting effaced. and that there is among us an earnest desire to recognise original identity of type and undoubted community of interests, and to fraternise and unite. Thus, then, it seems to me nothing strange, nothing phenomenal, that I should witness before me, in a vast and most influential assembly, the union of cultivated intelligence and patriotic ardour, and the confluence (so to speak) of many different streams of thought and of feeling. I see before me representatives from all parts of India, whose very personal appearance will bring home to the mind of the unprejudiced observer the conviction that, varied as are the castes and creeds

and races of India, there is still a powerful bond of union which makes our hearts vibrate with sympathy and mutual love, and a common affection for our mother-country. To well-balanced minds, such a gathering must appear the soundest triumph of British administration, and a crown of glory to the great British nation.

Gentlemen, let us not mind too much, or too little, what unfriendly or rather mistaken critics may say against us.

Let us stand firm in our conviction that these gatherings are useful and desirable for a multitude of reasons. Let our single aim be to justify ourselves by invariable loyalty, good sense, and moderation in our thoughts, words and deeds. These great qualities we have not to acquire afresh. Innumerable antecedent generations have happily bequeathed them to us. Let us retain this inheritance and trustfully place ourselves under the guidance of the great nation, and the great Government, which are providentially in charge of our destinies, and our future will be as satisfactory as it can possible be

Now that a splendid Empire has been constructed, completed and consolidated, now that unbroken peace and order have been established beyond the dreams of Asiatic philosophy, this Congress represents that very factor which is necessary for the further development of India.

From all that I have known of Englishmen, during half a century of intimate intercourse with the best of them, I have no hesitation in assuring you that your well-meant offer will not be superciliously rejected.

Henceforth, let us therefore invariably act on the principle that the various populations of this extensive empire are bound together by a common Government, by common interests, and by mutual sympathies.

Judged most unsparingly, the worst features of gatherings of this description might be superabundance of enthusiasm and

youthful impetuosity. But, as a great thinker has said, men learn to run before they learn to walk ; they stagger and stumble before they acquire a steady use of their limbs. What is thus true of individuals is equally true of nations ; and it is uncharitable to form a forecast of the future from the failings and weaknesses, if any such should exist, incidental to a nascent stage. The sentiments appropriate to such a condition of things are sympathy and kindly direction. An attitude of antagonism or of scorn only causes irritation and soreness ; and it rouses, not unfrequently, a spirit of recrimination, if not also of answering disdain. This is almost a law of nature. I will, therefore, ask our critics to remember the early history of nations and to judge in a spirit of charity and magnanimity.

When I ask this of our censors, permit me to advise you to be moderate and forbearing. It is the nature of vaulting ambition to overleap itself. It is the character of renovated youth to be carried away by excessive zeal. Steer clear of such shoals and quicksands. Discuss without prejudice ; judge without bias ; and submit your proposals with the diffidence that must necessarily mark suggestions that are tentative in their character. Much irritation and retaliation will be avoided if the mutual dependence of the rulers and the ruled is steadily kept in view. With the ruled it must be a postulate that rulers err from ignorance and in spite of their efforts to avoid mistakes. By the rulers it must be taken for granted that when subjects petition and expostulate it is not in a spirit of disputation or cavilling, much less of disaffection and disloyalty—but only to enlighten those holding sway over them, and, in a peaceful and constitutional manner, to have their wishes understood and their grievances made known. I entreat you to lay to heart these words of caution to all parties concerned—words which I ask you to accept, out of regard for my long experience, for my age, and for my earnest desire to see my countrymen prosperous and happy.

Gentlemen, there are amongst you many men of distinguished attainments, of high culture, liberal views, sound judg-

ment and sincere patriotism. The infirmities of age prevent me from enjoying the honour and discharging the duty of taking an active part in the discussions that you will enter upon. Let me, therefore, call upon you to elect from among the multitude of wise and learned and earnest men that I see around me, a President, whose lead you may follow with perfect confidence, and whose force of character and sincere interest in the true well-being of the country, will lead to your deliberations being directed into such paths, and confined within such limits, as will secure to your conclusions the regard and attentive consideration of all right-minded men. I welcome you once again with a heart overflowing with joy and pride, and wish you "God-speed" in your generous and noble efforts to elevate the political and social condition of our common motherland. Proceed, then, to elect a President : and may the Almighty Disposer of all things grant that you command that success which you so richly deserve.

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In this session 11 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I said about the setting up of a Rules Committee for the constitution and working of the Congress. Resolution II said about the Council Reforms. Resolution III reiterated demand for the separation of Judiciary from the Executive. Resolution IV said about Indianisation of the high military services and the establishment of a Military College in the country. Resolution V reiterated support to the British Government of the Indian volunteers in any moment of crisis. Resolution VI sought raising of income tax limit to Rs. 1,000 and the meeting of consequent loss, if any, by reduction in existing public expenditure or by reimposition of an import duty on finer category of cotton goods. Resolution VII desired introduction of technical education system in the country to encourage the indigenous manufacturers. Resolution VIII said about the removal of restrictions imposed by the Arms Act of 1878 enabling the people to possess and wear arms. Resolution IX said that the Rules of the Congress drafted by the Committee (under Resolution I) be stood over for consideration till next session. Resolution X fixed the next session at Allahabad on 26 December,

1888. Finally, Resolution XI resolved that the copies of all resolutions adopted at this session be communicated to H.E. the Viceroy with a request for their further communication to Her Majesty's Government in London.

As could be feared or gauged in advance, the English and the Anglo-Indian press as well as a section of the Muslim intelligentsia belonging to the Aligarh School repeated what they had said earlier. Hence, the official reporters of the Indian National Congress repeated their rejoinder in these strong words : "Compared with the Congress of 1886, the last Congress was more numerously attended, was more thoroughly representative and national in its character, and by the still more widely spread interest that it awakened throughout the Empire, the more systematic manner in which all its arrangements and proceedings were conducted, and above all—by the cordial support which it received from high class English papers in every Presidency, gave abundant proof of the great increase in the vitality of the movement, of which it is one outward and visible sign. Indeed, what in 1885 was little more than an experiment, in 1887 bore every appearance of having become a permanent National Institution." While refuting all sorts of wild allegations, Malik Bhugwandas, a delegate from Dera Ismail Khan, said : "There is no doubt now, as to the Congress being truly representative of the entire country and though certain Anglo-Indian papers may still make a great show of disputing this point, their position is just like that of a certain class of barristers, who, well knowing that they have no case, still, to please their clients, storm and bluster as if they were sure of gaining their cause and abuse and affect to despise the other side, well knowing, that the latter are sure to win. It is not the best kind of barristers who do this, but, neither are our opponents the best kind of journalists."

#### *The Fourth Session (1888)*

The Congress could now see its opponents not only in a section of the Muslim intelligentsia but surprisingly in the

community of the English rulers as well. Viceroy Lord Dufferin, with whose blessings the organisation came into being just three years back, now ridiculed it as a 'microscopic minority' and on the eve of his term went to the length of branding it as a seditious body. The Lt.-Governor of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh (Sir Auckland Colvin) signalised himself by his opposition when the official permission to hold the session in Khusro Bagh of Allahabad, the capital of the N.W.P. and Oudh, was withdrawn. Aided and abetted by the official sources, some anti-Congress associations were formed. It showed that, in the words of Mrs. Annie Besant, "all the reactionary and tyrannical elements had risen against the Congress, terrified at its growing strength". But the Reception Committee could be successful in hiring a private bungalow (Lowther Castle) in Allahabad belonging to a Nawab of Lucknow and the session opened there in the afternoon hours of 26 December. For this occasion 1,500 delegates were elected from different parts of the country, though 1,248 attended it—583 from the N.W.P. and Oudh, 254 from Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam, 163 from Bombay and Sindh, 95 from Madras, 80 from the Punjab, and 73 from the C.P. and Berar. To the astonishment of many critics, this session had a good number of the Muslim delegates and Maulvi Muhammed Hidayat Rasul explained the large band of such delegates from Oudh as "due to the kindness of our brethren in the Aligarh camp—the opponents of the Congress". Pheroza Shah Mehta proposed the name of George Yule for the presidentship and Sardar Dayal Singh seconded. Pandit Ajudhia Nath delivered the welcome address.

### **REFUTATION OF THE CHARGE OF DISLOYALTY\***

On behalf of the Reception Committee, I offer you a most hearty welcome. I rejoice to see so many friends and countrymen, many of whom have come from distances, at great perso-

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\*Address delivered by Pandit Ajudhia Nath, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Allahabad Congress, held in December, 1888.

nal inconvenience, assembled to try and secure, by all loyal and friendly means, the amelioration of the political condition of India. We rejoice because all the leaders of native opinion from all the various provinces and representatives of all the different communities of the Empire, have assembled here today to labour for that "summum bonum", the greatest good of the greatest number. If Allahabad has not been fortunate enough to be the first to secure the patronage of this great national institution, it may well be proud of being the first place where its organisation has arrived at a fair state of perfection. But while our organisation has so much improved, I regret to say that our arrangements for your reception have not been, by any means, as satisfactory as they were at either Calcutta or Madras. But, gentlemen, in consideration of the difficulties thrown in our way by the Civil and Military authorities, we have some claim to your indulgence. We were first of all led to believe—I may say distinctly informed—that we should be permitted to occupy the Khusro Bagh for our encampment. But a little later, to our great disappointment, we were told that the requisite permission could not be accorded; and no satisfactory reason was assigned for this change of front. In April, after much negotiation, permission was granted to us to pitch our camp on a large plot of waste ground lying between the Fort Railway Station and the Fort, on payment of rent. This rent we paid in advance, and we were assured that there would be no further difficulty in the way of our occupying that piece of land. But, gentlemen, in the month of August—four months later—we were informed that on sanitary grounds we could not be allowed to occupy that place, and the rent money, which we had paid in advance, was returned to us. Then we managed to secure a group of houses belonging to members of the Reception Committee and other friends, not very far away from the office of the *Pioneer*. This was too much for our opponents, and as some of the houses were unfortunately situated within the Cantonment limits, the Military authorities arbitrarily prohibited our utilizing those houses for Congress purposes. No inquiry was made as to the sanitary arrangements we were going to make.

It was apparently taken for granted that the Congress Camp—and you have seen what a beautiful and perfectly managed camp ours is—would be the filthiest and most insanitary of all gatherings. It is not too much to say that no other gathering for any other purpose would have been thus barred. Hundreds of thousands of men, poor, ill-clothed, ill-fed, and I fear not a few of them far from clean, are allowed to occupy land no farther from the Fort at the yearly Fair—hundreds of thousands who every twelfth year swell to millions—but no authorities, Civil or Military, interfere with them. But our gathering of less than one thousand and five hundred gentlemen, all well-fed and well-clothed, could not be permitted on sanitary grounds !

Then, as a last recourse, we were obliged to rent these premises where we are now assembled. You can, therefore, easily imagine the difficulties with which we had to contend. We obtained possession of this house and grounds on the 1st November, and had barely six weeks in which to make all the necessary arrangements for housing and feeding one thousand four hundred delegates. Those friends of ours who have come from Madras will, I hope, remember that the task of providing for the delegates in Allahabad has not been so easy as at Madras, where His Excellency the Governor himself lent them tents, assisted them in many ways, and sympathised with their work. But here I, a Member of the Council—but only a native Member—had to dance attendance for an hour at least in the Fort of Allahabad waiting the pleasure of the officers to grant me an audience—officers who not only gave us no assistance, but quite the contrary. All this will convince you that we have some claim to your indulgence.

I shall now ask you to elect your President. But, before you proceed with his election you may perhaps expect me to say a few words about the opposition of other kinds that we have had to encounter. You are now very familiar with the nature of that opposition. You know the strength of that opposition, and you also know that it is fast losing its power



for evil, and is dying out, as all unrighteous things sooner or later do. But I feel it my duty to refer to it in consequence of the letter of Sir Auckland Colvin to our most esteemed, but much abused, friend, Mr. Hume. Mr. Hume has not only now, but for years past, been working with infinite and exemplary zeal to promote the welfare of India, and we may leave it to time to vindicate him from the strictures of the Lieutenant-Governor. Again, I am sorry to say that portion of the Anglo-Indian press which delights in ridiculing and condemning the aspirations of the native community left no stone unturned to bring discredit on Mr. Hume. But we are not children. We know the game they are playing ; and we mean to stick to Mr. Hume to the last. His advice to us has always been that we should cherish loyalty and moderation, and yet he has been stigmatized as the most seditious man in India. The next reason which induces me to refer to this opposition is the speech of Lord Dufferin, who speaks of the seditious nature of some of our writings and speeches. Some few thoughtless non-official opponents had already, it is true, adopted similar means to discredit us. But I am surprised, I am astonished, to find any sensible man, let alone a gentleman occupying the position of a Viceroy, bringing a charge of disloyalty against us. It is impossible and I say it with great confidence—to find on the face of this earth a people more loyal than my countrymen. We claim the more perfect union of India and England, and yet we are called disloyal. Are we disloyal ?

Some people have gone to the length of talking such nonsense as to say that we want the Russians to come into the country. Now, gentlemen, I ask you, is it not absurd to suppose that the educated natives of India, who have such an admiration for the free and representative institutions of England, could ever wish to be under Russian rule or become Russian serfs ? History we have read, English education we have received, with Englishmen we have mixed and mixed freely, but we are not credited, it would seem, with sense enough to realize that the English Government is far better than the Russian or than

that of any other European power. The existence of the Congress, the very meetings which we hold annually, are the best proofs of the excellence of the British Government. Where will you find any Government which would allow a foreign country, which it had pleased Providence to place under its charge, to have the same constitutional freedom of speech as the British Government has been pleased to grant to us ? I will only mention to you one instance as a signal proof of our loyalty. When, a couple of years ago, there was some talk of a Russian invasion, not only our men, but, mark, please, also our women, expressed in an unmistakable manner their wish that the Russians should be kept out of the country by all possible means ; and were ready, in some cases, if needs be, to sacrifice those jewels, so dear to all females, to provide the necessary funds. If occasion arises we will prove to our opponents that it is we who are loyal and not they ; it is we who will support the Government and not they ; it is we who will be ready with our purses and not they. We fully acknowledge the inestimable blessings conferred upon us by Government.

We most gratefully admit the numberless benefits derived by India from the British rule, and all that we now say is this, that there is yet room for improvement ; that England can confer still further blessings upon us ; and that, therefore, we may properly approach our most gracious Majesty, approach her most respectfully and loyally with the prayer that she will cause all those gracious pledges given on her behalf to be now more fully redeemed. England has been the first to introduce free institutions into this country and we ask Her Majesty now to extend them so far as the circumstances will permit, so that to the end of time the English Government may be held up to all the civilized Governments under the sun as the very model of perfection. That our prayers will be granted sooner or later I have not the slightest doubt.

Two years ago, I gave the subject of the Congress my best consideration, and after mature deliberation I arrived at the conclusion that, so far from being dangerous to Government,

it embodies the essential germ of the permanency of the British Government. I have since then in consequence of Sir Auckland Colvin's letter and Lord Dufferin's speech, as a loyal subject of Her Majesty, reconsidered the matter, and, believe me, gentlemen, that I have been unable to discover in any of our speeches, publications, or proceedings anything which is at all seditious, or which in any way approaches to sedition. You know the multifarious duties of a Viceroy, and you know the heavy work of a Lieutenant-Governor, and I believe that these exalted officials have not had the time to study carefully our pamphlets, but have received their information as to their general purport and bearing at second hand, and you know what the value of that kind of second-hand information is. But this being so, it is the duty of every loyal subject of the Queen to prove, by his firmness in the cause, and by his moderation, that the charges brought against us by our kind opponents have no foundation in fact. This criticism and this opposition have given rise to certain misapprehensions, the most prominent among these being the idea that the government means to do injury to those who join the Congress. Nothing could be more absurd than such a rumour.

The great nation on whose possessions the sun never sets, the most advanced of nations, the first to introduce free institutions into this country, and teach us that rulers were created for the good of subjects, not subjects for the pleasure of rulers, the noble nation that has united justice with freedom, will never allow its officers to resort to much unjustifiable and unconstitutional measures. Englishmen as a nation are not capable of suppressing any loyal constitutional organization by any arbitrary or unfair means. Having said this much, I am obliged to say something more which is not quite so pleasant. News comes to us from district after district that people have been told by their official superiors that they would "come to grief" if they joined, subscribed to, or in any way aided the National Congress. Reports of this nature have reached me from Cawnpore, Etawah, Agra, Aligarh and other places too numerous to mention. I have letters in my office

to the effect that in one of the towns in the Aligarh district people held meetings, and were ready not only to elect delegates but to prove unmistakably the interest they take in the Congress by putting their hands deep into their pockets. But down came the news, "The district officer will be displeased with you". In Gorakhpore anti-Congress meetings were held, and Government officers took part in them. Important people were forbidden to take part in Congress meetings. Well, Sir ! a great many rumours are circulated which are not true, and we will hope that some of these at least may be more or less untrue.

Then there is an idea that the Congress party is only a microscopic minority. But it is not only natives who have received an English education, and even these may now be numbered by hundreds of thousands, who take part in this movement. I see before me, even in this Congress, numbers of gentlemen who though very highly educated and cultured, have not received any so-called English education. I have been to several places in these Provinces in connection with the Congress, and wherever I went I found great enthusiasm prevailing amongst all classes of people, and what you will be still more pleased to hear is that we have received contributions from all classes, even from those who profess to be against the Congress. Nay, from some of those whose names figure high on the list of so-called anti-Congress Associations. I cannot, of course, disclose their names, for they accompanied their donations with special requests that their names should never be disclosed. I have also received large subscriptions from native noblemen on condition that their names should not be disclosed, because they are afraid of the officials.

A question was recently put in the House of Commons by a member, in which it was stated that the Native Provinces and the Mohammedans as a body were against the Congress. You have here seated on the platform Sirdar Dayal Singh, the premier Sikh nobleman of the Punjab. Our illustrious friend the Maharajah of Durbhanga, a Brahmin of the Brah-

mins, the premier nobleman of Bengal, had made arrangements to come here to-day ; but circumstances over which he had no control—a sudden attack of illness-prevented him from being present. Here, too, you have Mohammedans, noblemen of the highest birth, scions of the ex-Royal houses of Delhi and Oudh, and others. Well, who are the Princes that are against us ? The Maharajah of Benares, and he alone ; and if I understand Rajah Siva Persad, who is attending this Congress this year, and declares himself to be a delegate, even the Maharajah of Benares is not against the Congress, indeed approves it, but only desires to protest against certain speeches and writings of some Congressmen which he disapproves. But can the Maharajah of Benares represent the Provinces of India, or ourselves ? Has he anything in common with us ? Then besides the Maharajah of Benares, there are some gentlemen who have the reputation of being the authors of certain anti-Congress pamphlets and letters to the press. I have the honour of knowing some of them personally, and can tell you that, so far from writing those pamphlets, they are unable to understand them. Since this question was put in the House of Commons, I have tried in vain to ascertain what native Princes were against us.

Again I ask you to turn your eyes round this hall and see if it is true that Mohammedans do not sympathize with us. In the last Congress the number of Musalman delegates was eighty-three ; now it is more than double. The Mohammedans of Oudh have returned at one meeting fifty-seven delegates, including members of the Royal House of Outh. Some twenty-seven Mohammedan delegates have been returned by the district of Allahabad, and no less than eleven were returned from a place where you might not have believed that even a single one would be elected. Yes, how rightly you have guessed the name ? And now you can appreciate the importance of this so-called opposition which sounds very nicely, but in which there is no reality, as all can see, when our opponents are obliged to have recourse to the desperate expedient of putting forward these few titled inanities to show

that the Princes of India are against us ; they stand self-condemned, and need no further refutation from us ; nor is it my duty now, I am happy to say, to have any fault to find with the Mohammedans, generally, for not joining us, much less for opposing us ; and if any Hindu can claim the honour of enjoying an intimate intercourse with the Mohammedans of this country, I certainly can and can assure you that, as a body, they are not against us. But, gentlemen, I am afraid I have detained you too long. It is enough for me now to say that, so far as I have been able to thresh out this question, persistent efforts in the cause of the Congress are the best and almost the only proofs that you can nowadays give of true and heartfelt loyalty to our beloved Queen-Empress. Our strength has been tried, our firmness has been tested, and our loyalty is unquestionable.

Then, gentlemen, what else is required for our success ? One thing, and one thing only, is required. We require and I say it—to reach the ears and attract the eyes of the people in England ; we require only to create a deep interest in Indian affairs in the Houses of Parliament and in the hearts of the British nation. I do not think that, hereafter, you will find the benches of the House of Commons quite so bare as in times past they have ever become as soon as an Indian Question was brought before the House. I sincerely hope that the members of the two Houses and the people of Great Britain will henceforth commence to take a more lively interest in Indian affairs ; and I hope most sincerely they will never for a moment be misled by the cuckoo cries of our local opponents, who incapable of refuting our arguments or justifying their frantic and unconstitutional opposition, charge us, and as they will know falsely, with disloyalty.

This is a charge that we will not submit to. Let them call us by any other opprobrious designation they please, and we will treat them with the silent contempt they merit. But if they charge us with disloyalty, we fling back the charge in their teeth, and say, and say truly, that it is they and not we who

are the real traitors to their country and their Queen. And now, gentlemen, I have already detained you too long and must ask you to proceed at once to the election of a President.

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In this session 17 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I desired more representation of the Indians in the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils and the establishment of a Legislative Council in the Punjab. Resolution II demanded that competition for the Indian Civil Service should be held simultaneously in England and India. Resolution III said about the affirmation of Resolution XI passed at the session of 1886 and Resolution III passed at the session of 1887. Resolution IV affirmed the Resolutions VIII, IX and X adopted at the session of 1886. Resolution V demanded setting up of a Commission consisting of the official and non-official members to look into the entire question of police administration. Resolution VI affirmed Resolution IV of the session of 1887, Resolution XII of the session of 1886, and Resolutions V and VIII of the session of 1887. Resolution VII desired ban on the evil of drinking. Resolution VIII said about the increase of taxable income to Rs. 1,000. Resolution IX demanded encouragement to general and technical education in the country. Resolution X desired setting up of a commission to enquire into the present industrial conditions of the country so as to encourage indigenous manufactures and alleviate the poverty of the people. Resolution XI urged the British Government to pay attention and do the needful in respect of resolutions already communicated to it. Resolution XII desired appropriate checks on the evil of prostitution.

Resolution XIII had its own importance that allayed the lurking fear of the people about the nature of discussion on some delicate matters of religion and social reforms. It said : "Resolved that no subject shall be passed for discussion by the Subject Committee, or allowed to be discussed at any Congress by the President thereof, to the introduction of which the Hindu or Muhammedan delegates as a body object, unanimously or near unanimously ; and that, if after the

discussion, it shall appear that all the Hindu or all the Muhammedan delegates as a body are unanimously or near unanimously opposed to the Resolution which it is proposed to pass thereon, such Resolution shall be dropped provided that the rule shall refer only to subjects in regard to which the Congress has not already definitely pronounced an opinion." Resolution XIV demanded that the question of the introduction of the Permanent Settlement of Land Revenue Demand into the Madras and Bombay Presidencies and other Provinces be referred to the several Standing Committees, with instructions to report upon the same in so far as it affects their respective circles to the Congress of 1889. Resolution XV disfavoured imposition of salt tax. Resolution XVI said that the next session be held at Bombay or Poona (as may be settled after) on 26 December, 1889. Finally, Resolution XVII said that A.O. Hume be reappointed as the General Secretary of the Congress for the ensuing year.

Regarding the achievement of this session, the official report of the Congress said that it "was heralded by a tumultuous outbreak of opposition. Ill-informed or prejudiced writers stormed, reviled and alike in Indian and English Journals and other publications, distorted every fact and speech. The secret enemies of British rule (too acute not to perceive that the success of the movement means the perpetuation of this rule), and large sections of the official community (too blinded by class bias to catch the faintest glimpse of this cardinal fact), together with their entire train of obsequious followers, laboured ceaselessly to strangle the movement. A Lieutenant—Governor came forward to denounce its methods and ridicule its measures, while a Viceroy—misled, let us hope, by the misrepresentations of adversaries—stood up to condemn its aims and objects in a public speech, characterised by misconception of facts, unparalleled in any public utterance, of any similarly exalted representative of India's beloved Sovereign".

The selection of an Englishman for the post of the president of the national organisation was by all means a great



event so as to dispel any apprehension about its being a seditious body. All mischievous propaganda failed to carry conviction with some enlightened Englishmen. Earlier at the Madras Congress Eardley Norton had refuted the charge that he was a 'veiled seditionist', and he went to the length of saying: "If it be sedition, gentlemen, to rebel against all wrongs; if it be sedition to insist that the people should have a fair share in the administration of their own country and affairs; if it be sedition to resist tyranny, to raise my voice against oppression, to mutiny against injustice, to insist upon a hearing before sentence, to uphold the liberties of the individual, to vindicate our common right to gradual but ever advancing reform—if this be sedition I am right and glad to be called a 'seditionist' and doubly, aye, trebly glad, when I look around me today, to know and feel that I am ranked as one among such a magnificent array of 'seditionists'." Likewise, on this occasion he said that, as an Englishman, he was ashamed of England, broken promises to India. Another Englishman (Howard) said: 'Not by violence or noise have the great things of the earth been achieved; not by ambition or by self-seeking can a nation's life be regenerated; but calm and indomitable reliance on the moral force which is the supreme reason, and by implanting in all with whom you may come in contact the conviction that you look for eventual triumph to these means and these only; and that the moral power which has made the English nation glorious throughout an Empire, on which it has been and well truly said that the sun never sets, is the power to which you trust for the triumph of these great principles of justice and freedom which you are all here assembled to vindicate and uphold'".

The writers of the official report of the Congress noted all these events with great hope and boldly asserted: "Whether there is any wisdom in a system of persecution, that while it stimulates to greater activity in secret, keeps nearly three-fourths of a movement like the Congress out of sight, we must leave it to others to decide. But this much is certain: The

Congress idea has now obtained such a hold upon the mind of the country that no earthly power can extinguish it. If ten thousand of the most prominent Congressmen were deported tomorrow, the idea would still creep on, spreading from mind to mind, till it had seized every man, woman and child amongst the Indian population, ever growing stronger and stronger in every mind which had received the seed. It is essentially beneficent in its character and in its open growth, instinct with peace and goodwill to men. Official opposition and persecution will not only add to its growth, but will operate to convert an open, above-board, constitutional movement into a secret, underground and therefore unconstitutional one”.

This presence and participation of a sizable number of the Muslim delegates was enough to testify to the fact of the growing popularity of the Congress. Syed Shurf-ud-deen, a well-known Mahomedan Barrister, in his speech made some remarks as to the present position of the Congress party and the real attitude in regard to it of the Mahomedan community, that deserve special attention : “Well, Gentlemen, you will remember perfectly well that in 1885, when the first meeting of the Congress was held at Bombay, it was said by adverse critics that it was a Congress of a few educated native gentlemen. Again you will remember that when the Congress was held in Calcutta in 1886, it was no longer called a Congress of a few native gentlemen, but a Congress of Bengalees ; and in 1887, when the Congress was held in Madras, it was not called a Congress of native gentlemen, or of Bengalees, but a Congress of Hindus. Now, gentlemen, here, in 1888, we have got before us not only Hindus, Bengalees and Maharattas, but I am proud to say we have here amongst us to-day more than 200 Mahomedads, including scions of the ex-Royal families of Delhi and of Oudh. Now I think I may be right in expressing the hope and opinion that next year, when the reports of the Congress have been published, it will at last be called by its right name, and accepted as an Indian Congress. You will remember that in 1885 there were scarcely any Mahomedans.

There was an increase at the next Congress, a further increase in 1887, and now I am proud to say that there are more than 200 Mahomedans present. I may tell you that in 1886, when the Congress was held in Calcutta, owing to some local or temporary reasons, the Mahomedans were charged with holding aloof, but I can assure you that, at least in my province of Bihar, the Mahomedans have the fullest sympathy with the objects of the Congress. And I can tell you that in my professional capacity I have to travel all over the division, and have consulted with my friends, many Mahomedans, and they have in every case proved to be in sympathy with and in favour of the Congress. At the same time I do not for a moment deny that there are some, indeed a good many, who, though fully sympathizing with the objects of the Congress, yet for personal and temporary reasons, think it best in their own interests to stay away. Still these gentlemen are with us and help us privately, and when official pressure diminishes will come round publicly. But abstentions of this nature—and they are more numerous amongst Mahomedans than any, except Mahomedans have any idea of—furnish no grounds whatsoever for reckless assertions, such as that recently made in the House of Commons by Mr. Maclean, that the Mahomedans, as a body, are against the Congress, or for designating this latter by any less comprehensive title than that which it righteously bears—The Indian National Congress. There are malcontents everywhere—there must always be some who dissent from anything their neighbours approve,—but the great bulk of the Mahomedans, as the great bulk of the Hindus, Jews, Parsees and Indian Christians, are everywhere for, and not against, the Congress”.

#### *The Fifth Session (1889)*

This session opened in Bombay on 26 December, 1889 in a very good atmosphere showing, in the words of Mrs. Annie Besant, that “the clouds which lowered over Allahabad had wholly dissolved away”. Sir Albert Sassoon, head of the Jewish Community, lent out his building for this purpose.

where 6,000 people assembled of whom 1,913 were delegates. While 2,500 delegates were elected from different parts of the country, 1,889 registered their names, and 24 paid for their tickets. There were 821 delegates from Bombay and Sindh, 336 from Madras, 261 from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, 214 from the Central Provinces and Berar, 165 from Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam, and 22 from the Punjab. When the first session of the Congress took place at Bombay in 1885, there were only 2 Muslim delegates, but on this occasion their number was 254. It was a grand gathering of persons belonging to different walks of life like the princes, landlords, peasants, merchants, contractors, barristers, pleaders, teachers, editors, journalists, money-lenders, bankers, brokers, manufacturers, traders, artisans, doctors, missionaries etc. To the surprise of many, 10 ladies participated out of whom seven were Indian. It could be noted with great satisfaction that the session was attended by a very large number of merchants and zamindars and also of the secretaries of the public bodies and members of the District Boards and Municipal Boards. The presence of an English MP, Sir Charles Bradlaugh, was a matter of special attraction who, like a true English democrat, could say, in the fashion of Thomas Paine, that the 'world is my country and to do good my religion'. Sir Pherozeshah M. Metha delivered the welcome address. After that W. C. Bonnerjee proposed and Pandit Ajudhia Nath seconded the name of William Wedderburn for the post of the president. In his address Wedderburn happily spoke of "the nationalising tendency which is no so powerfully leavening new India."

### **PASSING SUCCESSFULLY THROUGH TRIAL\***

Ladies and Gentlemen,—On behalf of the Reception Committee, I beg to tender to you all, delegates of the Fifth Indian National Congress, a cordial, sincere, and earnest welcome. It would be at all times a high pleasure and privilege to receive

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\*Address delivered by Pherozeshah M. Mehta, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Bombay Congress held in December, 1890.

and welcome so many and such distinguished guests from all parts of the country. But when I remember that, though you may not be the chosen of the people by any scientific mode of election, you virtually and substantially represent them, their wants, wishes, sentiments and aspirations, in all the various ways in which representation manifests and works itself out in the early stages of its progressive development, that pleasure and that privilege are infinitely enhanced. There is, besides, a peculiar zest in our welcome of you ; for in welcoming the Congress to Bombay, we welcome it back to "its own native land". I well remember the day, this time four year ago, when anxiously but hopefully, we launched the Congress on its enterprise, not of supplanting the existing rulers of the country, but of supplementing the endeavours of the best and most sagacious among them by proposing modifications and developments based on our peculiar and native knowledge and information, and suggested, gratefully, by that enlightenment and education, which is one of the most precious gifts bestowed upon us by British rule. The young enthusiast, whom we thus started, has now come back to us, robust and manly, broadened and strengthened, with a record of achievements of which we may be justly proud.

Even the indirect political gains of the Congress have not been inconsiderable. It has brought vividly into clear and emphatic recognition that most important fact of the growth of the national idea amongst us. Despite social and religious difference, we have all begun earnestly to realize that we are fairly on the way to a common national existence, united and bound together by the common political ties of an equal, impartial, and enlightened rule, just as the United States have raised up the American nation on the basis of an infinite diversity of races and creeds. When we call the Congress national, we give expression to this nationalizing tendency which is now so powerfully leavening New India. Instead of being jealously resented and angrily denounced, this free and frank acknowledgment of the grandest outcome of British rule ought to be welcome as a sure token of our rational and dis-

cerning loyalty at least by those who are always so mightily distressed that we do not set up a perpetual hallelujah in praise of it, in season and out of season. Then, gentlemen, the labours of the Congress have contributed to do that which is a necessary prelude to all reform, a thorough shifting and searching of some of the most viial of Indian political problems. Nothing that passion or prejudice, or malice could urge has been left unsaid.

And now that the proposals of the Congress have bravely stood the test, our opponents have recourse to the familiar device, which is so often employed to cover retreat, and they are lost in wonder that we are making so much fuss about things which have nothing new in them, and which have been long contemplated by many an Anglo-Indian statesman at the head of affairs. Now, gentlemen, we are quite ready at once to plead guilty to this not very dreadful impeachment. But though it may not be said of these statesmen what was once said of the Anti-Reform party in England, and can certainly be said of some Anglo-Indians, that they never have anything kind or generous to say of the Indian people, this may surely be said of them, that though they do sometimes have something generous to say of the Indians, they have never shown the slightest disposition to confer upon them any portion of political rights. If the Congress has done nothing more than quicken into action these political *yogis*, so that lost in contemplation, it will not have laboured in vain.

Laden with these and other gains, the Congress has now come back to us, but not without undergoing trials and ordeals, two of which have been of exceptional severity. The first device employed by our opponents was to create disunion and dissension among ourselves. Well, gentlemen, in a country so vast and varied as India, it would be impossible, it would be unnatural, to expect perfect and absolute unanimity. It is no wonder that we have our halt, our lame, and our blind, and that they should hobble off to what I may call the Indian Political cave of Adullam at the call of Sir Syed Ahmed and Rajah Shiva

Prasad. But when two gentlemen, so amiable, so patriotic, so anxious to display their loyalty, were united together in one party, and formed the Anti-Congress United Patriotic Association, the same difficulty arose that was described by Mr. Bright, from whom I have borrowed my illustration, as having arisen in the case of the Anti-Reform Adullamites. They were too like the traditional Scotch terrier, which was so covered with hair, that you could not tell which was the head or which was the tail of it. Sir Syed Ahmed pulled vigorously one way, Rajah Shiva Prasad as vigorously the other; and they so pulled between them the poor popinjay they had set up—that it burst, and poured out—to the amazement of a few, and the amusement of us all—not the real patriotic stuff with which it had been announced to be filled, but the whitest and the purest sawdust. The utter collapse of this vaunted Patriotic Association has taught our opponents a significant lesson. Every blandishment had been employed to lure prince and peasant; but prince and peasant alike would have none of it. It would be difficult to find a more convincing, if passive and indirect, proof that the heart of the country is with us, and that it understands and appreciates the honesty, the loyalty, and the propriety, of the movement. I should like to say here one word to the delegates from Bengal and the North-West Provinces, lest they should imagine that I have referred to these events, which pertain more particularly to their Provinces, with the object of indirectly boasting of our own immunity from human frailty.

Let me at once proceed to assure them that we in this Presidency, have also our halt, our lame, and our blind. We also have had our little cave of Adullam. But I am glad to be able to inform you that we have taken the infection very mildly, and that there is very hope of a speedy and complete recovery. Baffled in the attempt to disunite us, our opponents had recourse to a measure of extraordinary virulence. They raised against us a cry as terrible as the cry of heresy which was sometimes raised in the old days of the Inquisition to crush an obnoxious personage, otherwise unimpeachable and invulner-

able. They raised against us the cry of sedition and disloyalty. It was a cry well calculated to create alarm and uneasiness even among persons otherwise well disposed towards us. The Congress has, however, met the charge firmly and boldly—by a steadfast appeal to the authoritative record of our words, thoughts, and deeds, and to the personalities of the members composing it year after year. It was conclusively shown that the charge was founded on calumnies, lies, and misrepresentations. Then, gentlemen, something like the old story of the wolf and the lamb enacted itself. True, you may not be disloyal yourselves ; said the wolf, that does not matter at all ; it is quite enough that your great-grand-fathers were, and your great-grand-children might be.

The Congress has, however, emerged unscathed even from this trial. Never was a greater truth uttered than that to which our esteemed friend Mr. Caine gave utterance, that we of the Congress are more loyal than Anglo-Indians themselves. If by loyalty is meant a keen solicitude for the safety and permanency of the empire, in which, we are firmly persuaded, lie implanted the roots of the welfare, the prosperity, and the good government of the country, then we are certainly more loyal than Anglo-Indians, who do not hesitate frequently to subordinate the interests of that safety and that permanence to the seductions of conquest and vain glory, or to the immediate gains and temptations of commercial enterprise. Therefore, it is that all our greetings of welcome go forth to you, and with a full heart we wish you God-speed in your labours. Those labours have for their aim and object measures of which the central idea has been recently admirably summarised by one of the most sober and sagacious of modern politicians, Sir Charles Dilke, when he said that the time had now arrived when it was neither safe nor expedient to continue the administration of the country by the hands of a secret and irresponsible bureaucracy, and that working on lines already laid down, a distinct step in advance should now be made. The policy of the Congress is thus a policy, not seditious or revolutionary, but “conservative of the public welfare, strengthening the just



authority of the British Government, and adding day by day fresh lustre and dignity to the Imperial Crown". I do not know whether we are doomed to failure or destined to succeed ; but the blessing which rests upon all high and honest endeavour will surely rest upon a mission imposed by duty, sanctified by patriotism, and guided by loyalty. And now, gentlemen, I know you will not allow me to conclude without giving utterance to the deep thankfulness which we feel at the presence among us today of one whom we have learned to hail as the Member for India in the British House of Commons. The strength and greatness of the English character has been proudly sung by one of their most charming poets in lines with which we are familiar :

"Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,  
I see the lords of humankind pass by".

But it has always seemed to me that English strength and greatness consist in nothing so much as in the lofty conception of moral and political duty which illumines the life and career of many an illustrious Englishman. We still mourn the loss of that great and good man whose heart was always with us, and whose voice was always raised for us, during many a long and eventful year. The memory of John Bright is reverently enshrined in our hearts. His place was filled by one whose life has a singular charm for all who prize sober simplicity and nobility of character above rank and riches. I mean Professor Fawcett. The mantle has now descended upon Mr. Bradlaugh. We sincerely and unaffectedly joined in general grief at his recent illness, not simply out of selfish fears of losing our chosen champion, but out of that single-hearted feeling of sorrow which all men feel, when peril threatens a life devoted to high and unselfish ends. I know I am not employing the language of exaggeration when I say that our hearts are unutterably stirred within us at this presence among us to-day, restored to health and usefulness. With no particular thoughts of the Congress in our minds, let us wish him that simple welcome which is in all our hearts and the hearts of people all over the country. Having now delivered to you my message of welcome, I invite you to proceed to elect your president.

In this session 15 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I said about the presentation of an address to Sir Charles Bradlaugh. Resolution II said about Council Reforms. "Resolved that the following skeleton scheme for the reform and reconstitution of the Council of the Governor-General for making Laws and Regulations, and the Provincial Legislative Council, is adopted, and that the President of this Congress do submit the same to Charles Bradlaugh, Esq, M.P., with the respectful request of this Congress that he may be pleased to cause a Bill to be drafted on the lines indicated in this skeleton scheme and introduce the same in the British House of Commons :

*Scheme*

1. The Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils to consist respectively of members, not less than one-half of whom are to be elected, not more than one-fourth to sit ex-officio, and the rest to be nominated by Government.
2. Revenue districts to constitute ordinarily territorial units, for electoral purposes.
3. All male British subjects above 21 years of age possessing certain qualifications and not subject to certain disqualifications (both of which will be settled later) to be voters.
4. Voters in each district to elect representatives to one or more electoral bodies, according to local circumstances at the rate of 12 per million of the total population of the district, such representatives to possess certain qualifications and not to be subject to certain disqualifications, both of which will be settled later.
5. All the representatives thus elected by all the districts included in the jurisdiction of each electoral body, to elect members to the Imperial Legislature at the rate of

1 per every five millions of the total populations of the electoral jurisdiction, and to their own Provincial Legislature at the rate of 1 per million of the said total population, in such wise that wherever the Parsis, Christians, Mohammedans or Hindu are in a minority, the total number of Parsis, Christians, Mohammedans or Hindus as the case may be, elected to the Provincial Legislature, shall not, so far as may be possible, bear a less proportion to the total number of members elected thereto, than the total number of Parsis, Christians, Hindus or Mohammedans, as the case may be, in such electoral jurisdiction, bears to its total population. Members of both Legislatures to possess certain qualifications and not to be subject to certain disqualifications, both of which will be settled later.

6. All elections to be by ballot”.

In view of its importance its full text is quoted above. Resolution III said about the ratification and confirmation of previous resolutions. It was : “Resolved that this present Congress does hereby ratify and confirm the resolutions passed by previous Congress sessions as to—

- (a) the urgent necessity for the complete separation of executive and judicial functions, such that, in no case, shall the two functions be combined in the same officer ;
- (b) the expediency of expending into many parts of the country, where it is not at present in force, the system of trial by jury ;
- (c) the necessity of withdrawing from the High Courts, the powers, first vested in them in 1872, of setting aside verdicts of acquittal by juries ;
- (d) the necessity of introducing, into the Code of Criminal Procedure, a provision enabling accused person, in warrant cases, to demand that, instead of being tried by the Magistrate, they be committed to the Court of Sessions ;

- (e) the highly unsatisfactory character of the existing system of Police Administration in India, and the absolute necessity of a fundamental reform therein ;
- (f) the expediency of both, establishing Military Colleges in India, whereas the natives of India, as defined by Statute, may be educated and trained for a military career as officers of the Indian Army, and of authorising, under such rules and restrictions as may seem necessary, such a system of volunteering for the Indian inhabitants of the country as may qualify them to support the Government in any crisis ;
- (g) the extremely unsatisfactory character of the Income-Tax Administration, especially as regards incomes below rupees one thousand, and the expediency of raising the taxable minimum to this amount ;
- (h) the extreme importance of increasing, instead of diminishing, as the present tendency appears to be, the public expenditure on education in all its branches, and the necessity, with a view to the promotion of one of the most essential of these branches the technical, of the appointment of a mixed Commission to enquire into the present industrial condition of the country ;
- (i) The impolicy and injustice involved in the rate of increase of the Salt Tax in time of profound peace, and the urgent necessity for an immediate reduction of this tax, and the reimposition, to balance the deficit thus caused, of light *ad valorem* import duties ;
- (j) the necessity for the reduction of, instead of the continual increase to, the military expenditure of the country."

Resolution IV thanked Mrs. Caine and Mr. Smith for their sympathetic attitude towards India's problems. Resolution V desired raising of the age of candidates for the ICS examination from 19 to 23 years and repeated the demand for holding

examinations simultaneously in India and England. Resolution VI said about the repeal of the Arms Act. Resolution VII urged the Government to take up the matter of Permanent Settlement in all fully populated and well cultivated tracts of the country. Resolution VIII desired that plate duties on silver should be immediately abolished and the hallmarking be made a voluntary institution. Resolution IX urged that any matter of the grievances of the Indian people be referred to the Committee of the Indian Budget in the House of Commons. Resolution X said about appreciation of Lord Reay's administration in the presidency of Bombay. Resolution XI resolved that the Subject Committee should settle questions relating to the qualifications of the voters, representatives and members of the Central and Provincial Legislative Councils and submit their report to Sir Charles Bradlaugh. Resolution XII re-elected A.C. Hume as General Secretary of the Congress for the next year. Resolution XIII said about framing of the Rules relating to the selection of the candidates for the session and the raising of funds to meet the expenses of the Congress for work in the country and abroad. Resolution XIV fixed the next session of the Congress at some city in Bengal (to be decided later) on 26 December, 1890. Finally, Resolution XV offered thanks to Sir William Wedderburn for his coming over to India and presiding over the session despite his old age and busy schedule of work.

About the success and achievement of this session, the official report of the Congress says : "It is pleasant after the senseless opposition that in past years, we have had to surmount, to be able to record that the fifth session of the Indian National Congress commenced and ended under the happiest auspices, no man, practically hindering or molesting it... After all, a good cause is safe to win all the world over, and marvellous as is the change that a single year has wrought in the position of the Congress, it is only what, sooner or later, was certain to ensue. Still, it is gratifying to know that the tables have been turned, and that save a 'microscopic minority', none of our fellow subjects now believe us to be:

'seditionists' or doubt that our great Congress is working towards the good, alike of India and England.... A hall, the quaint picturesque beauty of which has seldom been equalled and which, when crowded by the brightly clad representatives of all India's multitudinous clans and peoples, presented a spectacle that, for breath and brilliancy of colouring, has certainly never been surpassed.

"Unquestionably Mr. Bradlaugh's kindly presence had contributed in no small degree to the greatness of the gathering, both of Delegates and Visitors. This was his first visit to India and to the Indians he was still only a name—and yet millions of hearts throbbed with pride and pleasure, when present at the then coming Congress. Again no Englishman living is more trusted or more respected throughout India, than is Sir William Wedderburn, and the news that he had consented to come out to India to preside over the assembly, undoubtedly gave a further stimulus to the country which, having crushed all serious opposition was to tell the truth, a little lazily inclined. Partly owing to these favourable influences and partly to the great spread during the past year of the Congress idea throughout the country, this last Congress proved to be by far the greatest and grandest assembly yet witnessed—greater and grander, perhaps, than will ever again occur, in our times at least....."

*The Sixth Session (1890)*

This session was held at Calcutta in the Trivilo Gardens in a big temporary hall. It opened on 26 December, 1890 and continued for four days. Though the crowd could touch the figure of 8,000 the number of delegates could be 702. It was due to the decision of the Congress taken at the earlier session to have 5 delegates per million of population in order to manage the number of participants. Thus, about 1,000 delegates were elected and only 677 actually attended it—377 from Bengal, 148 from the North-Western Provinces and Ouch, 58 from Madras, 47 from Bombay and Sindh, 29 from Central

Provinces, Berar and Secunderabad, 18 from the Punjab, and 25 were without certificates. The session was followed by the Social Conference. By this time open opposition of a section of the white bureaucracy and of the Muslim intelligentsia belonging to the Aligarh School had lost its weight but the leaders of the Congress had gained courage of conviction to be critical of the policies of the British rulers. Thus, angry opposition to the trans-frontier policy and especially the cruel invasion of Afganistan grew noticeable. The Congressmen disfavoured such imperialistic endeavours causing misery to the people. Mano Mohan Ghose delivered the welcome address. After this Romesh Chandra Mitra proposed and Nawab Shamsheedola seconded the name of Pherozeshah M. Mehta for the presidency who took the chair.

### **BEGINNING OF A GREAT STRUGGLE\***

Delegates to the National Congress, it has devolved upon me to offer you our most hearty welcome on this great occasion. It has been impossible for me to decline the honour which the Reception Committee have thought fit to confer on me by asking me to be their Chairman, and, in that capacity, to welcome you in their name and on their behalf. That honour, you will, I am sure, all agree with me, could not have been possibly conferred, in the first instance, upon any abler or worthier member of the Bengali Community than my esteemed friend the Hon. Sir Romesh Chander Mitter. It is a matter of congratulation to all of us that, although the cause of the administration of justice in these provinces has suffered by his retirement from the high office which he lately held, he is now in a position to take an active interest in the proceedings of this great national demonstration, and to guide us by his varied experience and by his sound judgment. When I learnt that the state of his health precluded him from occupying the position which legitimately belongs to him, and that it

\*Address delivered by Mano Mohan Ghose, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Calcutta, Congress held in December, 1890.

was his especial desire that I should perform that duty, which of all men in our community no one could have performed more gracefully or fittingly than he, I felt that I had no right, by reason of my own incompetency and unworthiness, to decline the high honour which my colleagues had decided to bestow on me. I conceive it is not only an honour, but a duty, which every citizen owes to his country, to respond cordially to any call which may be made upon him to assist in an undertaking which has for its object the welfare and the happiness of one's fellow-countrymen.

On the last occasion when you assembled in this city you were welcomed by one of the most distinguished citizens of Calcutta, who, by reason of this profound scholarship and wide reputation, was eminently fitted to be the spokesman on behalf of the people of these provinces. It is a matter of sincere regret to us all that long continued illness should have prostrated our distinguished friend Raja Rajendra Lala Mitra ; but it will be a source of gratification to you all to be assured that, though tied down to his sick bed, and therefore unable to greet you once more on behalf of the people of Bengal, his heart is entirely with us, and that he continues to be as staunch a supporter of this great movement as ever. It is my painful duty to express to you, on behalf of the Reception Committee, our sorrow at the irreparable loss we have sustained in the course of the year by the death of one of our ablest and most zealous workers—I mean the late Babu Mohesh Chander Choudhry.

In him Bengal has lost one of her truest patriots, and the National Congress one of its most earnest supporters and active workers. I had the high privilege of enjoying his friendship for many years, and I can unhesitatingly assert that this presidency has not yet produced a man whose memory ought to be more dearly cherished by us than that of my lamented friend Mohesh Chander Choudhry. In simplicity of habits and purity of life he was essentially what a pious Hindu ought to be, while in breadth of views, in honesty of purpose, and in general culture, few men excelled him even



among the more favoured races of the West. Such a man the hand of death has somewhat prematurely removed from us, and, before we had quite time to recover from the shock, we found ourselves deprived, though temporarily, of the valuable assistance and co-operation of two of our most energetic workers, one of whom, I regret to say, is unable, by reason of continued ill health and domestic affliction, to be present to-day—I mean our distinguished friend Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee—while the other, after suffering from severe illness for some time, is, I am glad to find, able, to encourage us by his presence to cheer us by his eloquence—I refer to my friend Mr. Surendra Nath Bannerjee. It is now four years since the National Congress met in this city; since then you have assembled in the great cities of Madras, Allahabad, and Bombay, in every one of which places the reception accorded to the delegates has been of such a character as to make us in Calcutta feel that, after all, we are able to do very little in connection with the Congress of 1890, to deserve the high rank which is popularly assigned to Bengal as the most advanced and the wealthiest province in India. I am afraid, that, with all our efforts this year to give you a fitting reception, our arrangements are defective in many respects; but this I can assure you, on behalf of the people of Bengal, that they yield to no other Presidency in the heartiness and the cordiality of the welcome which they wish to offer to the distinguished representatives of the different parts of this great country, who have honoured us with their presence to-day. It is not within my province to discuss any of the topics which are likely to engage your attention in this Session; but it is, I think, fitting that I should not sit down without making some general observations as regards the real aims and objects of the National Congress and our course of action in the future.

Our proceedings have been subjected to much and varied criticism, and for my part I am glad that such should have been the case. All our proceedings, our discussions, and our resolutions are public property, and it is only right that they should be subjected to public scrutiny, for I believe we have every-

thing to gain and nothing to lose from honest criticism—however unfavourable such criticism may be. That, besides legitimate criticism, the proceedings of such a body as ours should be subjected to unworthy attacks, and our aims misrepresented and distorted, is a matter which, however painful to us all, ought not to discourage and dishearten us. For what great cause in the history of this world has ever triumphed without, in the first instance, having met with unworthy and even rancorous opposition? Our opponents have not even hesitated to accuse the promoters of this movement of disloyalty to the British Government. If I could bring myself to believe that the accusation, however unfounded, had been honestly preferred by those who are responsible for starting it, I should have felt myself called upon to deal with it seriously; but the charge has always seemed to me so preposterous and so dishonest on the part, at any rate, of a large portion of our detractors, that I think every speaker in this hall ought to treat it with silent contempt. There is, I believe, no one present here who, in his heart of hearts, does not feel that at no period in the history of India were life and property more secure than they are at the present day. If English rule in India had done nothing more than that, we should, even then, have had ample reason to be grateful to English, for, as you know, the establishment of peace and the maintenance of law and order are the first requisites for the happiness of a people.

To my mind, our allegiance to the British Government is based, not only on the feeling of gratitude which the benefits conferred upon us must evoke in our hearts, but also upon the highest grounds of expediency; for every sane man in India, who is capable of thinking, must feel that any change of Government at the present time would be the greatest calamity that could befall the people of this country. That we should have been better pleased if we could have governed ourselves as well as we are governed by England, is a sentiment which we need not in the least shrink from avowing, because not only is such a feeling natural, but it is perfectly consistent to my mind with true loyalty to England. The National Congress movement

was fittingly described last year by my friend Mr. Pherozeshah Mehta by welcoming the delegates in Bombay, as "the grandest outcome of British rule in India." To that description I will venture to add that it is also the natural and, indeed, the inevitable outcome of the generous policy pursued by England in this country.

The fact which we all gratefully acknowledge, namely, that India is now better governed than before, or the fact that no other Asiatic country is at the present time better governed, furnished no argument whatever against the demands made by us with the sole object of improving the administration of the country. The English people have no right to complain if we refuse to judge of their acts and professions, as rulers of this country, by any standard lower than what they themselves have taught us to respect and admire. If England has been instrumental in teaching an Asiatic people a higher code of political morality she can scarcely complain, with any show of reason, if we expect her strictly to adhere to that code in the government of her own dependencies, and to carry out the professions and declarations which have from time to time been made in her name and on her behalf.

The great demonstration of to-day, I think, we are all agreed, implies nothing more than this, *viz.*, that, much as England has done for us, she has much more to do, or, in other words, that the administration of India is not perfect, but that there is still considerable room for its improvement and reform. This, I believe, to be the keystone of this great national movement. It is not a movement intended in the slightest degree to embarrass or hamper the Government of country, but to assist that Government by every means in the great and difficult task in which it is engaged. Viewed in this light—and I am sure you all agree with me that it is our most anxious desire that it should be viewed in no other light—I fail to understand how it is that we have not yet met with a sympathetic recognition at the hands of those who are responsible for the good government of this country.

It is impossible, in any country, to carry on the work of government for any length of time, without consulting the wishes and wants of those who are governed ; and it is obvious that when the Government of a country is practically in the hands of a foreign people, it is all the more necessary for that Government, and, indeed, it is its duty, if it is to exist for any good purpose, to ascertain the wishes and even the aspirations of those who are governed. If such is the duty cast upon those who are called upon to govern, it is equally the duty of the people themselves to acquaint the Government by all constitutional means with their own wishes and their requirements. We are not so unreasonable as to expect that all our suggestions should be at once carried out, or that all our demands should be at once granted without due consideration. All that we desire is that our suggestions should be honestly and sympathetically considered, and that if difficulties, which we ourselves may fail to perceive, should deter the Government of the day from acceding to any of our wishes, we may be taken into the confidence of the Government, so to speak, in order that we may be in a position to help it, if we can, in grappling with those difficulties. This, I believe, is the true position which the National Congress in India desires to occupy.

An idea is said to prevail among certain officials in the vicinity of Whitehall as well as in this country, to the effect that the supremacy of England in India is mainly based upon the disunion of the different races existing in this country, and that any attempt to unite them, even to a limited extent, upon a common political platform, is fraught with ultimate danger to the safety of the British Empire. I cannot for a moment believe that any Englishman, having any claims to statesmanship, can seriously entertain such an idea, based as it is altogether upon a superficial, and, I venture to drink, an erroneous conception of facts. "To divide and rule" is a wicked policy, as unworthy of the great English people as it is practically impossible after what they have themselves done for us ; because you can no more, now, keep the different races of this country disunited in feelings and sentiments, for any length of time, than you can

abolish your schools and colleges, your railroads and telegraphs. But then, it is asked, "Whom does the National Congress represent ? What right has it to speak on behalf of the masses of the people who know nothing about the Congress ?" My answer is, the National Congress represents the thinking portion of the people of India.

The delegates present here to-day are the chosen representatives of that section of the Indian people who have learnt to think, and whose number is daily increasing with marvellous rapidity. It is perfectly correct that the ignorant masses, whom we seek to represent, are still unable, in many provinces, to take an active interest in the great social and administrative problems which are now engaging the attention of the educated classes ; but history teaches that, in all countries and in all ages, it is the thinking classes who lead the unthinking, and in the present state of our own society we are bound, not only to think for ourselves, but also to think for those who are still too ignorant to exercise that important function. If, by reason of the peculiar intellectual condition of the people of India whom we are seeking to represent, not only some of those who have actually chosen us as their delegates, but also many others, are still incapable of exercising any choice in the matter, I am sure we are not insensible to the grave responsibilities which we are incurring in speaking and acting on their behalf. Our duty to our less favoured countrymen requires that we should not shrink from incurring those responsibilities. I believe we are all agreed that it is our duty to educate our ignorant countrymen not only to think, but to think rightly, and to instil into their minds the fundamental doctrine that the happiness of a people primarily depends upon the maintenance of law and order in the country, and that if they have any grievances the only way to obtain redress is to agitate by peaceable and lawful methods. In trying to discharge so obvious a duty we can well afford to be ridiculed as self-styled delegates or as belonging only to "a microscopic minority".

Gentlemen, I feel I ought not to trespass much longer on your patience, but there is one other accusation to which I can-

not help alluding, although it has been satisfactorily answered at more than one of our previous gatherings—I refer to the charge, so often repeated, that the National Congress, as a body, is opposed to social reforms. Such an accusation is based upon an entire misapprehension of the scope and functions of the National Congress, whose object, as I have already explained, is to point out to the Government what we conceive to be the defects in the administration of the country, and to ask only for such reforms as we are ourselves absolutely incapable of introducing without the aid of the Government, and in regard to the necessity of which we are all practically of one mind. Now, the many questions of social reform which are at present engaging the attention of the educated classes throughout India, are questions the solution of which is entirely in the hands of the people themselves. It is open to all of us to live as we like, or to eschew or alter at any time any custom which we may consider inconvenient or mischievous.

The remedy being entirely in our own hands we can apply it whenever we choose, and on the majority of points we are, unfortunately, by no means all of one mind yet. Besides, it should be borne in mind that the Congress is composed of diverse communities, each having its own religion and its peculiar usages, and it would be impossible for such a body to discuss the social customs of a particular community, based as they often are upon religious ideas, regarding which the members of another community professing a different religion have no adequate knowledge or information. But, it by no means follows that the promoters of the National Congress are not as keenly alive to the importance of social as they are to that of political reforms. The same educational agency which has given life to the National Congress has already helped to bring about enormous social changes throughout India. Half a century is but a day in the life of a nation, and any one who compares the state of Indian society of the present day with what was the case even thirty years ago, cannot but be surprised at the rapidity with which we have moved in social matters during that period. If there are some who think we ought to

have moved still faster, they, in my opinion, ignore altogether the enormous difficulties against which we have to contend in this matter. There are movements of a very important character already on foot amongst the different communities of our people to promote the cause of social and religious reform, and in my humble judgment we should be travelling out of our legitimate province if we were to deal with such questions in this assembly.

Those who know my own views will readily believe that I yield to none in the country in attaching importance to the question of social reform ; but at the same time I cannot but feel that it is our duty, however keenly we may feel on the subject, to remember that any precipitate or inconsiderate action, before the creation of a healthy public opinion in a community, is often apt to retard progress and to defeat the very object we have in view. We ought to be thankful to our English friends for any suggestions they may be disposed to make to us on the question of social reform, so long as those suggestions are made in a sympathetic spirit ; but, at the same time, we must ask them to bear in mind, that it is impossible for an outsider or foreigner to realize adequately the difficulties which the different Indian communities have to contend against in matters of social reform. Our English friends, whose kind sympathy and advice our social reformers are always delighted to have, may also be asked to remember that the decision of the question as to what reforms should or should not be introduced must, from the very nature of the case, rest with the Indian people themselves, and that, therefore, the true remedy lies in educating the people and creating a healthy public opinion on questions of social reform. To my mind, this gathering itself must have, and indeed already has had, the effect, directly and indirectly, of giving a great impetus to the cause of social reform. It is true that there are social problems connected with our domestic life of so important and pressing a character that, in my opinion, the sooner we direct our attention to them, and deal vigorously with them, the better for our country ; but all I say is, that those are questions with

which the Congress, composed as it is of different communities, ought not at present to have any direct concern.

I have thus far dealt with criticism which have emanated chiefly from members of the Anglo-Indian community and the English press ; but, before I conclude, I may be permitted to allude to one argument which I have sometimes heard used by some of our own people who are in sympathy with the Congress. I have heard it asked : "What good result has the Congress secured to us ?" To those desponding spirits among us who are apt to indulge in such an argument, I cannot do better than reply in the words of one who spent his noble life in agitating for the good of his own country, and of mankind in general, and whose name is deservedly cherished by us all in India. In 1885, when I had the honour of a long interview with the late Mr. John Bright at Birmingham, he told me, as I was coming away : "Tell your people, on your return home, that they must not expect immediate results, nor must they lose heart if they do not get what they want. The English people themselves have not obtained any concession from their own Government without long and persistent agitation. It took Cobden and myself thirty years to get the Corn Laws repealed. Tell your people, as coming from me, that they do not deserve to succeed if they expect immediate results." I trust that this message, sent to us by that great champion of our rights a few years before his death, will encourage you all to persevere in the great cause which you have taken up.

Remember that this is only the beginning of a great struggle, and that these annual gatherings of ours are but physical representations of that great and wonderful national awakening which is taking place everywhere in India. The sight that we witness to-day may well justify any one of us indulging in the reverie of the great English poet when he exclaimed : "Me thinks I see in my mind's eye a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep and shaking her invincible locks. Methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-



day beam, purging and scaling her long abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance, while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what this means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms." Gentlemen, I once more beg to offer you a hearty welcome, and I ask you to proceed to the business of the day by electing a President for this Sixth Indian National Congress.

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In this session 14 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I reiterated the demand for Council Reforms. Resolution II said about the ratification and confirmation of the previous resolutions. Resolution III expressed earnest hope of the Congress that the grievances of the native people would be looked into by a Committee of the House of Commons. Resolution IV desired excise reforms and temperance. Resolution V said about the removal of salt tax. Resolution VI said about the extension of Permanent Settlement System to all temporarily settled tracts in which certain conditions had long been settled. Resolution VII protested against restriction on the attendance of Government officers in the Congress sessions in the capacity of 'visitors'. Resolution VIII offered thanks to the services of great figures like Charles Bradlaugh, William Wedderburn, W.S. Caine, Naoroji etc. Resolution IX contained a vote of thanks to the hosts of this session. Resolution X fixed the next session either at Madras or at Nagpur on 26 December, 1891. Resolution XI urged the holding of next session with at least 100 delegates in England. Resolution XII said about the funds of the Congress. Resolution XIII also said about the funds of the Congress to be spent by the British Committee and the office of the General Secretary. Finally, Resolution XIV said about the election of A.O. Hume as General Secretary and of Pandit Ajudhia Nath as Joint Secretary of the Congress for the ensuing year.

#### *The Seventh Session (1891)*

This session opened at Nagpur on 28 December, 1891 and continued for three days. It was attended by 812 delegates.

480 from the Central Provinces, Berar and Secunderabad, 137 from Bombay and Sindh, 73 from Bengal, 61 from Madras, 56 from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, and 5 from the Punjab. C. Narain Swami Naidu delivered the welcome address. Pherozeshah M. Mehta proposed and Pandit Ajudhia Nath seconded the name of P. Anand Charlu and he became the president of the Congress.

### **A PERFECTLY LEGITIMATE MOVEMENT\***

Sister and Brother Delegates,—As Chairman of the Nagpur Reception Committee, an honour which I fear I have but ill-deserved, the most pleasant duty of welcoming you all to our Seventh Indian National Congress devolves upon me. The word “seven” awakens in me a strange sensation. It has a mysterious meaning. It has ever been considered by the best and wisest men of all ages as an auspicious number, carrying with it virtues of a peculiar character. It is a most auspicious sign, indeed, that the Congress, after its hard fought battles on India’s coasts, at Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta, has at last been attracted by our Arya Varta, our mother country, to the very centre of the Empire, from whence I fully trust it will, by the grace of Providence, so develop and spread its vivifying life-giving influence, as to leave no corner of this great Empire uncheered by the gospel of good hope that it bears to all India’s children. May it be from Nagpur as a centre that our proposed mission issues to England, to impress upon our enlightened and ever well-wishing Aryan brothers there, the necessity of enfranchising us, redressing our just grievances and bringing us to the same level as themselves as they have nobly pledged themselves before God and man to do. May it be from Nagpur, I say, as a centre, that this grand mission may start. Ours is a humble province, a small city; our resources are very limited, and education here has, as yet, made no such great progress as in those parts of the country which for far longer periods have enjoyed the privilege of British rule. But

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\*Address delivered by C. Narain Swami Naidu, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Nagpur Congress held in December 1891.

though we cannot for a moment pretend to vie with the splendid receptions accorded to you in the grander capitals of this great Empire, we can at least honestly assure you—and I do so from the bottom of my heart—that in no other place have the people been more truly rejoiced at your presence, or more earnestly anxious to do all their little possible to make you welcome, happy, and comfortable. Welcome, dear friends, welcome, welcome a thousand times.

Forgive any shortcoming in our arrangements, and believe us that never were prouder or happier hosts, never guests that their hosts desired more to honour; that, poor and humble as we are, our whole hearts are with you, our fellow-countrymen, and with the great cause which unites this day all. India in one close brotherhood, seeking by all honourable and open means the good of our dear mother country and all her countless millions of children. At the very outside I desire, with your permission, to strike what I conceive to be the keynote of this great, and, as many now feel, sacred movement.

Loyalty to the British Crown, love of the British people, to whose advent here, India owes its rebirth, a thorough and ungrudging appreciation of the excellence of the intentions of our government in India, and a fixed desire and firm resolve to bring about, by a loyal and constitutional means, such administrative reforms as shall permit of those good intentions, bearing still better fruit for India's people, than they have hitherto yielded. Despite what some few people still seem to fancy, we are neither so inconsiderate nor so ungrateful as not to recognise fully and be deeply grateful for those good things that, under God's dispensing providence, have accrued to us through, and by means of British Rule. But we clearly see that this rule is still in many respects capable of improvement, and that year by year, as time rolls on and the population increases, and the natural and necessary consequences of widespread education evolve on a larger and even larger scale, the necessity for that improvement becomes more and more urgent.

Loyal and loving subjects of Great Britain as we are, desirous of the everlasting union of England and India, we know—let outsiders misjudge us as they may—that we can render no greater service to either country than by openly protesting against what we consider unsuitable and defective in the existing administration, and by insisting, by all proper and legitimate means, on those changes in this administration which we, as children of the soil, and as knowing our own country and our countrymen in many respects better than our rulers, see and feel to be a necessity of the times. It is a great help and encouragement to us, after the unmerited abuse to which we were subjected in earlier years, to find that many of the ablest and the greatest men, both in England and in India, now commence to realise the great service that the Congress is performing and to lend an ear to its counsels. We remember with gratitude and satisfaction our present Viceroy's declaration last January, that the Congress was a perfectly legitimate movement, that every one not a Government servant was perfectly free to join it, and that all Government officials were prohibited from impeding it in any way or putting pressure on any one to induce them to abstain from aiding or joining it. Thus encouraged, and true to our first principles, true to England, true to our beloved country and our countrymen, let us persevere in the good work. One obstacle, the cruel misconception, and, must I say it, the still more cruel misrepresentation of our aims and objects to which we were subjected, has been practically overcome, but many others still remain.

We have to get the rank and file of the European official community, as well as those of the higher ranks, not merely to tolerate us as harmless, well intentioned, enthusiasts, but to realize that we are earnest, practical men, who do really know our country and our countrymen, their wants and their aspirations in many respects better than even the ablest amongst themselves. We have got to get them, in a word, to work along with us realizing our capacities and usefulness, while we, on our part, cordially acknowledge their superiority in many points. We have got to bring home our exact position, the

inequitable disabilities we labour under our many grievances, the miserable condition of fully one one-sixth of our poor population, to the British electorate, and, through them, bring such pressure to bear on the ever worked British House of Commons as will lead it to take up the legislation needful to permit the authorities here to effect the reforms we pray for. We have got to educate, each in our own province, district, and town, those of our fellows, who as yet have failed to realise the purpose and true significance of our movement. We have to get the whole country solid behind us, and this we can do, and, with God's help, will do. Lastly remembering what our friend and General Secretary, India's "Grand old man," is never weary of telling us, viz., that in the long run every nation ever gets exactly as good a government as it deserves. Let us set our own house in order, and make sure that we do really and truly deserve a better government, in many respects, than is now ours ; let us aim at higher and nobler things than those which at present too absorbingly occupy most of us let us prove ourselves worthy, not only of a better government, but of the great land that has borne us, and the illustrious ancestors from whom we have descended. But I occupy too much of your time—and I must, without further preface, now call upon you to elect your President.

Before you proceed to discharge this duty, however, there is one point which has escaped me, and to which I am bound to give every prominence, and that is the friendly and sympathetic attitude of our official chiefs here and in Berar. As to Berar I dare say my friend Rai Saheb Deo Rao Vinayek will have some mention to make of the kindly sympathy which Colonel Kenneth Mackenzie, the Commissioner of those Provinces, has ever displayed towards the Indian community and their aspirations. Here, I, as a Central Province man, am chiefly concerned in acknowledging publicly and gratefully, the liberal manner in which our respected Chief Commissioner, Mr. A.P. Macdonell, has dealt with the Congress question. Here in the Central Provinces we have no official opposition to encounter. Our officials, as a body, are, it seems to me, certainly more in

sympathy and touch with us Indians here than, if we are to believe half we hear, the officials in many other parts of the country seem to be. As regards the Congress, Mr. Macdonell has most unreservedly declared, both in words and in writing that, so far as he was concerned, every official who wished it was at full liberty to attend the Congress as a visitor, and that all might rest assured that he should think no worse and no better of any officer because he did or did not attend the Congress ; it was a matter to be left entirely to their own discretion and in which they might just please themselves. To me in conversation he fully endorsed Lord Lansdowns' famous letter which set forth that the Congress was a perfectly legitimate movement, and that the Congress party are analogous to the Liberal party in England, and he added : "Of course you Indian gentlemen, who think as you do, have a perfect right to agitate in a Constitutional manner for those concessions to which you consider yourselves entitled." Gentlemen, if all the rulers and officials in India resembled the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces and his officers, Indian would not now need, and would never have needed a National Congress. But, alas ! they constitute exceptions and not the rule, and we are bound all of us to acknowledge in the most public manner such liberality and manly freedom from bureaucratic prejudice, and therefore before I go further I will ask you to give three cheers for Mr. A.P. Macdonell and the officers of the Central Provinces Commission. And now this duty discharged, let me once more ask you to proceed to elect your president.

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In this session 18 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I said that a Committee be appointed to consider and report by 30th December, 1891 whether, or not, it would be advisable to discontinue the Annual Sessions of the Congress until after the British Session and, if not, under what regulations, as to the number of delegates, localities for assemblage etc. the future Congress would be held. Resolution II reiterated the demand for Council Reforms. Resolution III urged eradication of the

poverty of India. Resolution IV demanded adequate protection and defence of the country. Resolution V reiterated demand for holding examination for the Indian Civil Service simultaneously in England and India. Resolution VI said about reduction of the salt tax, raising the taxable limit on income from Rs. 500 to 1,000, and implementation of the excise policy in an effective way. Resolution VII said about police and judicial administration, separation of judiciary from the executive, amendment in the Criminal Procedure Code so as to enable the accused persons in warrant cases to have their cases committed to the sessions court, and better service conditions of the Police personnel. Resolution VIII urged for the promotion of education in all branches of knowledge. Resolution IX desired to express thanks to Gen. Booth for his missionary services in India. Resolution X endorsed the report of the Committee (appointed under its Resolution I) and said that annual sessions of the Congress should continue to be held as usual in the country. Resolution XI desired implementation of the forest laws keeping in view the interests of the poor people. Resolution XII appreciated the services of William Wedderburn and of the British Congress Committee. Resolution XIII thankfully appreciated the services of Sir Charles Bradlaugh. Resolution XIV thankfully appreciated the services of Dadabhai Naoroji. Resolution XV urged that the proposal of holding next session of the Congress in England be now suspended, until after the next General Election there. Resolution XVI said about the funds to be spent by the British Committee of the Congress and by the office of the General Secretary. Resolution XVII said about the election of A.O. Hume as the General Secretary and of Pandit Ajudhya Nath as the Joint Secretary for the ensuing year. Finally, Resolution XVIII fixed the next session at Allahabad on 26 December, 1892.

About the significance of this session, Mrs. Annie Besant says : "No one who reads these records of Congress work can fail to recognise the single eye to the freedom, prosperity and happiness of the motherland ever shown by the Congress. The

intense sympathy with the sufferings of the masses, the effort to gain primary education for them, the protest against the laws and administration that were reducing the peasantry to hopeless poverty, these were all close to the heart of the Congressman. Never was there a falser accusation than that which tried to divide the Voice of India from the inarticulate masses whose sufferings it proclaimed, by calling the Congress a movement merely of discontented educated men, wanting place and power."<sup>1</sup>

### *The Eighth Session (1892)*

This session opened at Allahabad on 18 December at the same place (Lowther Castle) where it had been held four years back. The Maharaja of Darbhanaga extended his full support to the session.<sup>2</sup> It was attended by 620 representatives—323 from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh,

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1. Annie Besant : *How India Wrought for Freedom*, p. 134.

2. Reference should be made here of an important event that took place in February, 1892. It was dubbed as a bomb shell. A.O. Hume wrote a circular letter (dated 16 2 1892) in which he gave vent to his feeling that 'the cup of misery of the scores of millions of our masses was well-nigh full and that a terrible rising was at the door'. In order to meet this situation he wanted the Indian leaders to awaken and organise popular opinion, chiefly in England. The letter was a confidential document for circulation among the members of the Congress only. But it was published in an English newspaper and became a source of fear both for the English rulers and for a number of Congressmen. Hume was not at all wrong when he wrote that "poverty which is the mother of anarchy and pressing heavier" and that the Government "will not be able to protect you or itself". The contents of this letter were strongly taken exception to in the official world. In the House of Commons Maclean shouted (on 26 April, 1892) that "under a less mild rule than ours, he (Hume) would be hanged or shot as a traitor." Since some senior Congress leaders were very particular about proving their firm and unwavering loyalty to the British Raj, they (as Pandit Bishamber Nath and P.M. Mehta) declined to circulate the letter on account of their fear of being labelled as 'seditionists'. But Rao Bahadur Mudholkar, W.C. Bonnerjee, Eardley Norton and Tilak gave their open support to the stand of Hume.



105 from Bengal, 77 from Bombay, 63 from the the Central Provinces, Berar and Secunderabad, 38 from Madras, and 19 from the Punjab. Pandit Bishamber Nath delivered the welcome address. After that P. Anand Charlu proposed and Dinshaw E. Wacha seconded the name of W.C. Bonnerjee for the presidency. He chaired the session.

### **INDIA'S POLITICAL REGENERATION UNDER BRITISH RAJ\***

My Sister and Brother Delegates,

Though professing to be a devout votary of temperance up to this moment, I feel something has just inebriated me. It cannot be alcohol or wine. It is something too cheery and elevating. It is, I fancy, that cordial nectar, the intoxicating pleasure of meeting you all here in this hall of all nations. My proper function, on this occasion, I am happy to notice, is a short and sweet one, and equally grateful to my own feelings. I have not to preach a sermon from the pulpit, nor to inflict upon you a long verbose speech with a pyrotechnic display of oratory. My duty is simply to bow to you all, and wish you cordial greetings after my oriental etiquette.

An indifferent speaker, such as I am, might naturally feel nervous on rising to address so grand an assemblage, which, I may say without using any figure of hyperbole, is a miniature imitation of the highest deliberative Council in the world. Should my words fail me in giving expression adequately to my grateful feelings, I am confident you will appreciate the language of my heart, which, I believe, is the proper vehicle for conveying the sense of gratitude and esteem. Permit me then, on behalf and in the name of the Reception Committee, who have done me an honour that I do not deserve, to welcome you here to the Eighth Indian National Congress. The welcome, I beg to offer you, is not merely a ceremonious one. It is, I assure you, prompted by that sanctorum, the

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\*Address delivered by Pandit Bishamber Nath, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Allahabad Congress held in December, 1892.

heart of hearts. There is an Arabic saying which in plain English means "Seldomer, the Welcomer", its paraphrase being—add to affection come by alternation. You are, therefore, the more welcome as we have the pleasure of meeting here again after a rather long interval of four years.

You must have observed, I dare say, that there is a certain amount of advantage, combined with convenience, in the situation of this our tabernacle, close as it is to the Government House. Had we been privileged to establish a telephonic communication, between that stately mansion and this cottage of the people, His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor would have been able to listen to what we say, and thus to give us a hearing, if it so pleased him. But His Honour proceeded on his winter tour only yesterday.

As I proceed further, I cannot help observing, that in our mundane affairs smiles and tears stand sometimes side by side, and that joy and sorrow are, as it were, born twins, as a Persian phrase goes. You will, therefore, excuse me, if you find me animated or affected by mixed feelings of pleasure and pain. I am exceedingly glad to see so many worthy representatives assembled here from the various parts of this vast peninsula and your genial presence, while it has brought a cheery sunshine into our midst, proves to demonstration that the keen, abiding interest evinced in our movement, is keeping pace with the steady development of the movement itself. At the same time, I am grievously sad to miss from amongst us that noble patriot of his country, whom alas! I see only in shadow and not in substance now, and into whose shoes I have been constrained, against my own will, to step by an unfortunate devolution of melancholy succession. Lamentable it is, indeed, that the necrology of our other leading men has swelled out of all proportions, and that we have to mourn deeply their untimely and premature loss. But as survivors left in the field, it behoves us to complete what they unfortunately have not been able to finish. It is our duty to cherish and perpetuate their sacred memory, and in order to attain that

object, we must strive to lay stone upon stone, layer upon layer, and storey upon storey, until our Temple of Liberty rears up its proud head and reaches its destined pinnacle of glory, to the utter amazement and confusion of those who have been watching its rise with a degree of unjustifiable suspicion and mistrust.

This monument, no doubt, serves as the best living testimony of the blessings of liberty which we happily enjoy under the Pax Britannica. And the common platform, upon which we stand hand in hand, has its solid foundation sunk deep in the adamant rock of true devotion to the august Throne of our beloved Sovereign, the Queen-Empress of India. Every true Englishman, with whom the love of liberty is an instinct, must rejoice in his heart to witness that that proud day in the history of the British occupation of India has come, when the children of the soil have learnt to stand upon their feet, and are now claiming their just rights in a loyal and constitutional manner. Both posterity and the history of our movement when written calmly, will, I am convinced, accord a just appreciation to its legitimate aims and reasonable objects. They not only err but sin, and sin criminally too, who insinuate that this movement is calculated to sap and undermine the foundation of constituted authority.

To be sure, such sappers and miners its supporters are not. Indeed, they are the sentinels in a hopeful band of volunteers, whose watch-ward and bugle-call are, "Beware of true enemies in the guise of false friends". And the shibboleth of that band, marching forward with the banner of liberty, is—Peace, Progress, and Political advancement. The movement, instead of being a heap of loose dynamite, as it has been stigmatised, is a useful and necessary safety-valve in the highly complex machinery of the British rule in India. Our position has been well recognised by that eminent statesman, His Excellency Lord Lansdowne, our ruling Viceroy, and we do not now stand in need of any more characters from the minor satellites.

The late Lord Lytton, one of our distinguished Viceroy, on the occasion of the Delhi Assemblage, was pleased to observe that the polity affecting the well-being of the British Indian Empire involved administrative problems left unsolved by Caesar, unsolved by Charlemagne, and unsolved by Akbar. Of these, a crucial problem, which is, I believe, the burning question of the day, is, what is the possible remedy for ameliorating the condition of the 280,000,000 of souls in this extremely poor country. I would venture to reply, that the remedy is not far to seek. It lies in reducing the enormous military expenditure, in curtailing the "Home charges", and in mitigating the general rigour of taxation. It is true that the British rule, as regards its intrinsic value, is solid pure gold, and therefore, as costly as that precious metal itself. It is, however, a true axiom of modern political science, that a State must adapt its polity to the good of its people, and that it must govern them not only justly, but cheaply too. Lord Brougham says, somewhere in his political philosophy, that "the good of the people is the only object to be considered in the arrangements of Government, and that this fundamental doctrine is the test by which every institution must be tried; and every institution is to be supported or condemned according as it is found sufficient to answer its purpose of promoting the common good or wanting in this object". There are various other means that might be resorted to for bettering the condition of the people here, such as utilising indigenous products and materials, and giving a more extended scope to the employment of competent Indian, of proved merit, in the public service, without distinction of colour and creed, which is a great bane of an alien rule.

I may, now, as well proceed to observe that our present Session is the calmy eighth in contrast to the stormy fourth. In 1888, the position shown on the part of the local authorities, lamentably countenanced by the narrow policy of our late Pro-Consul, had naturally roused our enthusiasm to such a pitch that it not only over-powered and crushed down opposition, but frustrated all selfish designs to set one class against

another. Happily, however, though there is now a lull in that respect, the movement has acquired a lasting permanency, which it is impossible to shake or disturb. Certain incidents, with which we were amused on the occasion of the last session here, and the adverse criticism, which left a fugitive effect upon our minds, stale and unprofitable as they now are, have all faded out of our view, and been happily relegated to the limbo of oblivion. Raja Shiva Prasad too with all his stars and decorations and historical lore, both sacred and profane, has evidently received no inspiration to relappear on the scene ; and a bogus Patrotic Association, started by him and his colleagues, did die a natural death so soon as it was born. Is this not a true touchstone for testing the righteousness or otherwise of a cause ?

Sir Auckland Colvin, in the midst of an over-crowded programme of his hygienic and humanitarian fads, has left some testamentary relics of a fragmentary nature. One of them is his studied and laboured oration delivered not long ago at the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh. He there confessed to having borrowed a great deal of his politics from the political teachings of the venerable sage there. It is the repetition of the old story again, that the introduction of a representative system on an expanded basis into our Legislative Councils would not suit the existing condition of our people. We need not now care much for such imbecile platitudes. We have gained a partial victory. The India Councils Bill has passed into law. And though we have not got all that we wanted, the day, I hope, is within measurable distance, when the enlightened and benevolent policy of the Liberal statesmen and the intuitively generous instincts of the British nation will prompt them, in the interest of justice, to concede devotion to their Sovereign.

Permit me to say a word as to the necessity or otherwise of holding these annual sessions of the Congress. Some of our critics say that it is a sheer waste of money spent upon, what they are pleased to call, "talking Camps," and that the

enormous amount wasted already might have been profitably used otherwise, with far better and more practical results. I regret I am unable to share this view. In the good old days some fanciful means and appliances were hit upon, now and then, by the then rulers of this country, for the purpose of enabling their people to make their personal grievances audible. Anang Pal, a distinguished Hindu monarch, and long after him the Emperor Jahangir, had fastened for the purpose, in their palaces at Delhi and Agra respectively 'chains of justice' made of gold. But such chains could scarcely have been of any practical service or use, even in those days, when the wonderful powers of steam and electricity had not been discovered or utilised. We are now at the fag-end of the nineteenth century, and live under the aegis of a rule, which recognises only lawful agitation by constitutional means. Hence the necessity of our resorting to such a course. Whether such agitation is a blessing or a curse of the present civilisation, I do not propose to discuss here. We must go on, and go on vigorously, and not cease to agitate until we reach the goal of our ambition.

The rise and growth of the British Indian Empire, with its great dimensions, enormous population, and vast resources, will stand unparalleled in the annals of the world. And it will remain a marvel for ever how a handful of merchants, trading originally in tea and silk have carved out for their sovereign an empire, in comparison with which the historical Roman Empire falls into the shade. Whether this brightest jewel in the diadem of Britain has been acquired by a breach or observance of the Ten Commandments is a matter that need not be discussed here. One thing is quite obvious. Its safe preservation in her casket needs an extension of a more considerate and liberal treatment towards those from whose exhausted mines it has found its way into distant shores. The Bible of the British Constitution is as Christian as the Gospel of the faith of the British people. And it is to the truths inculcated in that Bible that we appeal most earnestly for the political regeneration of India; and Her Majesty's Indian subjects,

who represent races once great in their own way but now comparatively behind in the race of progress, do crave from Her that humane treatment which the mighty, can well afford to vouchsafe to the fallen. The political emancipation of India will be a landmark in the history of the British civilisation, and when that time comes and come it must, it will change the relations between the conqueror and the conquered, into those of affectionate ties and intimate friendship.

Many speculative persons, I observe, have been exercising their minds, by asking themselves—Why ought England to retain India ? I would say to them—Because India wants to be retained by England, and by no other power on earth. If Russia dares to move an inch beyond the line of demarcation, chalked out for her, she must think over twice before she ventures to take such a perilous step.

I must now close by being allowed to quote a passage from a useful work. It is : "That the deep sense of duty, a special heritage of the British nation, handed down to them from the days of their Puritan ancestors, has made them scorn the idea of holding rule over others, solely to benefit themselves. And this feeling, I hope, will retain its strength in upholding her beneficial rule over India for many many generations to come". To this I myself would say thrice—Amen, amen, amen.

It only remains for me now to request you to elect a President for this assembly. I crave one word more, I appeal to those who have eyes to see for themselves and not jaundiced eyes as some of our journalistic friends seem to have. Let them judge and say whether the present session is duller than the dullest, or livelier than the liveliest than we ever had before. I beg your pardon for my feeble and tremulous voice which I have lost during my illness.

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In this session 22 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I said that while the Congress appreciated the provisions of the Indian Councils Act, 1892, it failed to meet its expectations as

it did not provide for the election of the representatives of the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils and hoped that the rules being framed under this Act would conform to the lines of Gladstone's declaration made in the House of Commons. Resolution II urged that the report of the Public Service Commission be implemented in all sincerity and that the examination for the ICS be held simultaneously in England and India. Resolution III demanded separation of judiciary and executive. Resolution IV desired solution of the Currency Question conducive to the interests of the Indian people. Resolution V said about the reaffirmation of previous resolutions as those relating to the reduction of salt duty, raising of the minimum taxable limit on income to Rs. 1,000, trial of the accused in warrant cases by sessions court, reform of police services, suitable modification of the provisions of the Arms Act, and provision of a military college in India. Resolution VI reiterated demand of the Congress for trial by jury. Resolution VII desired reduction in military expenditure. Resolution VIII said about the provision of more grants for higher education in the country. Resolution IX urged eradication of the poverty of India. Resolution X reiterated the demand for proper implementation of the Forest Laws. Resolution XI said about the Petitions to be prepared by a committee (consisting of P.M. Mehta, Dadabhai Naoroji, Anand Charlu and Surendranath Banerjea) for their presentation to the House of Commons. These petitions would deal with the standing demand of the Congress for the Indianisation of public services and holding of ICS examination simultaneously in England and India.

Resolution XII demanded creation of a Legislative Council in the Punjab. Resolution XIII thankfully acknowledged the services of Sir William Wedderburn and other members of the British Congress Committee. Resolution XIV registered protest of the Congress against all State-regulated immorality in India. Resolution XV said that the proposal of holding the next session of the Congress in England be suspended. Resolution XVI expressed thanks to the people of Central Finsbury for



electing Dadabhai Naoroji as their representative for the House of Commons and also to Naoroji for his great services to the country. Resolution XVII said about giving of 500 pounds to the British Congress Committee to meet certain expenses. Resolution XVIII said about giving an amount of 2,800 pounds sterling to the British Committee for its expenses for the year 1892-93. Resolution XIX said about the reappointment of A.O. Hume as the General Secretary and the appointment of P. Anand Charlu as the Joint Secretary of the Congress for the ensuing year. Resolution XX fixed the next session at Amritsar on 25 December, 1893. Resolution XXI expressed thanks to the Maharaja of Darbhanga for his services to this session. Finally, Resolution XXII said that Pandit Bishamber Nath be appointed in place of late Pandit Ajudhia Nath as one of the Trustees of the Congress Permanent Fund.

### *The Ninth Session (1893)*

Instead of Amritsar as decided at the last meet, this session opened at Lahore on 27 December and continued for four days. It was attended by 867 delegates—481 from the Punjab, 133 from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, 124 from Bombay and Sindh, 59 from Bengal, 39 from the Central Provinces and Berar, and 31 from Madras. The Chairman of the Reception Committee was Sardar Dayal Singh Majithia who could not deliver welcome address written for the occasion on account of a violent attack of rheumatism and it was done by Harikishan Lal. After this P. Anand Charlu proposed and Moulvi Muharram Ali Chishti seconded the name of Dadabhai Naoroji for the presidentship. He chaired this session for the second time, earlier at Calcutta in 1886.

### **GREATEST GLORY OF THE BRITISH RAJ\***

Ladies, Gentlemen and Fellow-Delegates,

It has fallen to me on behalf of the Reception Committee of the Ninth Indian National Congress to accord a cordial

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\*Address read out by Harikishan Lal at the Lahore Congress held in December, 1893.

welcome to the delegates of the Ninth Indian National Congress to the capital of our Province and in doing so I cannot help feeling an overpowering sense of glory and pride such as I have never before experienced in my life. It is our peculiar good fortune to live under a Government which, by the spread of liberal education and the annihilation of distances, has made it practicable for us—the inhabitants of the remote parts of this vast empire—to meet every year at different centres to discuss those great problems so intimately connected with the advancement and prosperity of our fatherland. We have a glorious past of course of which we need not be proud, and we clearly see the prospect of a hopeful future before us under the benign influence of British rule and I think most of us present here believe that the kingdom of heaven is not behind but before. The darkness that enshrouded our land for so many centuries has begun to be dispelled, and the streaks are already visible above the horizon that herald the approach of a glorious dawn. A hundred years ago when Lord Cornwallis was laying the foundations of the empire on a solid basis, the country, as a whole, was still in a state of disorder and anarchy.

Two generations later witnessed the advent of that illustrious nobleman, Lord William Bentinck, who first sowed the seeds which fell fast on the fertile soil and germinated vigorously, and watered by the generous hand of Lord Hallifax, and warmed by the establishment of universities sprouted forth into luxuriant growth. The crisis that followed in 1857 enveloped the empire in momentary gloom, but this speedily passed away and the car of progress began once more to glide smoothly and rapidly along, propelled by the genial force imparted by that great statesman who in a moment of imminent peril, safely guided the vessel of State to her moorings, the immortal Canning. A generation later appeared on the scene that liberal-minded ruler, that candid friend, that cordial sympathiser, that supressor of wrong and supporter of the weak and the down-trodden the best and the most illustrious of Viceroys, the righteous Ripon to whom we owe the amalgam that united the scattered units of the Indian nation and

stimulated those national sentiments and aspirations of which the Indian National Congress is the direct outcome. The National Congress—the greatest glory of the British rule in this country—thus started, has had its sittings at the principal centres of Indian intelligence and progress. But this is its first session in this Province and it rouses our deepest emotions and stirs up our innermost feelings to be able to give it a hearty greeting and to have an opportunity to show the rites of hospitality to those who at considerable personal risk and sacrifice have undertaken distant journeys and assembled under this roof for furthering the cause of their country. This is the second attempt that has been made towards holding the Congress in the Punjab.

The first attempt was made at Allahabad in 1888 when the delegates from this province offered to invite the next Congress to Lahore but that attempt was infructuous because some of our leaders having recently had experience of the opposition that the Congress had met in the North-Western Provinces entertained apprehensions of greater and more serious difficulties being thrown in our way in this Province. We are glad, however, to say that no such apprehensions have visited us on the present occasion. We now live under the strong regime of a wise and dispassionate ruler who as an ex-Judge of one of the highest tribunals in this country takes judicious view of questions, and does not allow himself to be carried away by executive impulses or administrative theories. It gives us much pleasure to express our sense of obligation to Sir D. Fitzpatrick personally in spite of the resolution of the Punjab Government on the now famous circular letter of our Director of Public Instruction, for his fair attitude towards the Congress, to tender our thanks to local officials who taking their cue from their Chief have offered no opposition but have rather treated us with courtesy during the time that preparations were going on for the Congress. Comparison is odious and I shall, therefore, avoid it as far as possible but all those who were present at Allahabad in 1888 and heard the speech of the late lamented Pandit Ajudhia Nath in his capacity of

the President of the Reception Committee will be able to form a contrast in their minds as to the circumstances under which the fourth Congress was held and the ninth Congress has now assembled here. The fact that this is a frontier and younger province only lends additional vigour to the contrast and reflects greater credit on the head of the local administration. It has been asserted that the Congress is a Babu-movement and the martial races of India have no sympathy with it. This great assembly is a living refutation of all assertions of that description. The Congress has already had two sittings at Allahabad and on each occasion the hearty and active adherence which the people of the N.W. Provinces and Oudh have shown to the cause speaks for itself.

It is true that the Congress has never been held here previous to this occasion but it was not because the people of this Province did not feel any interest in this National Movement and appreciated it duly but on account of the apprehended difficulties I have alluded to before. It is impossible and quite unnatural that in the midst of the general national reawakening the Punjab alone should lie steeped in torpor. The east gave light to the west in old antiquity but the light so given has come back reflected in greater brightness and its revivifying influence is felt from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. To suppose that the Punjab has held aloof from the Congress is absurd. Is it possible that those credited with possessing most fire in their blood should be the least susceptible to this influence?

No, the wand of the magician has touched our eyes. The history and literature of England have permeated our minds, the great heritage of our western Aryan brethren has descended on us collaterally as it were, and we are allowed at times, grudgingly it may be, to have share in it. We happily live under a constitution whose watchword is freedom and whose main pillar is toleration. We look back complacently on our past history and glory in it. Can we then in the midst of this national upheaval remain quiescent and indifferent? The

same generous causes that are at work elsewhere have been operating here also and any difference in the results hitherto obtained is attributable mainly to the fact that these causes reached here last in point of time. We may naturally be somewhat behind the other provinces in the race of progress but we are not idle and if we be true to the traditions with which our past records are replete we should try hard to make up our deficiencies and take our proper place in the march of national advancement.

It would be superfluous now to meet the stale old charge of disloyalty and sedition brought against the Congress. It has been discussed threadbare and the Congress has come triumphant out of the discussion. The highest authority in the land, the head of the Government of India—has been pleased to characterize the Congress as a “perfectly legitimate” movement “representing in India what in Europe would be called the more advanced liberal party”. No endeavour was spared to traduce the Congressmen, to call them by all manners of harsh and disreputable names, to attribute to them selfish and other motives, to misrepresent their aims and objects, and to discredit them before the public in India and in England. But we are happy to be able to say that not only have the Congressmen survived all the desperate endeavours of their opponents but have actually grown so influential that when a short time ago an attempt was made to get up an anti-Congress demonstration in one of the important cities of this province not far from the capital, the all-powerful district officer actually discouraged the attempt on the ground that such a demonstration even though backed by all the official influence of that place would prove perfectly abortive and quite inadequate for the purpose of stemming the tide of educated public opinion in favour of the national movement. The district officer was right. The hand of the clock cannot be put back. The country has been advancing rapidly under the banner which floats and flutters in the air proudly from Peshawar to Calcutta. The arbiter of the destiny of nations has not placed the people of this vast country under the aegis of British rule for no purpose. The ancient mother-

of art and science, of religion and philosophy rent and torn by internal dissension and trampled under the oppressor's relentless foot was to be rescued from her woeful fate, and lo ! a body of obscure merchants was sent out to trade in the East, and how this magnificent empire was built up subsequently is known to the readers of history. But these merchants from the far West were only the means to an end. Flushed with success, exultant man often arrogates to himself what he could have never dreamt to accomplish without the help of the Almighty, the causer of causes.

"There is a divinity that shapes our ends". It is this divinity that shaped the ends of the body of obscure merchants, instilled patience and wisdom in their breast, expanded their views, enabled them to overcome their older and more powerful competitors, diverted their attention from commerce to conquest, taught them to form a mature organisation out of raw materials, inspired them with the principles of righteous toleration and led them along the career of splendid achievements which are now the wonder and admiration of the whole civilised world. Verily there is a deeper meaning in all this than that a handful of Englishmen should grow rich at the expense and miseries of the countless millions that inhabit this woe-worn, land. England's mission in India would remain unfulfilled if she failed to raise a once great but now fallen country from her present degraded position, to place her on the path of moral, material and political advancement and prosperity.

It is this mission which the Indian National Congress calls upon England to perform. It is for this that we are knocking at her door. Happily for both England and India the genius of the English people is eminently fitted for the performance of this mission. Their views and sympathies are as liberal as their possessions are world-wide and it is therefore that they have been able to establish an Empire over which the sun never sets. In the economy of providence there is always a fitness of things, an adaptation of means to ends and if at this moment England heads the great powers of the world it is

because she has eminently deserved her exalted position. And that position she will continue to occupy and to maintain as long as she does not descend from her high moral pedestal, and governs the people committed to her care by providence not in the interests of the rulers but of the ruled.

For ourselves we are fully sensible of the numerous boons we have received at her hands and our hearts overflow with gratitude. Those who call us ungrateful either do not understand us or misrepresent us. The Indian mind still connects Royalty with Divinity and considers it a meritorious act to have a sight of the royal person. It has not yet been divested of the notion that the king is the vicegerent of God on earth, not that law is superior even to a king. This makes Indians the most loyal and law-abiding people on the face of earth. What the Congress contends is not that the country should be transferred from English to Indian hands, no,—not the change of hands, for it would be entirely suicidal, but that the people should be governed on those broad and liberal principles which have been held by eminent British statesmen and administrators themselves to be most conducive to the interests of both the rulers and the subjects.

The constitution of all civilised Governments allows appeal to the highest authorities. British India is no exception to this rule. The laws in force here permit appeal in almost every branch of administration. The judgement of an inferior officer is open to examination by his superior. Why should then the exercise of this privilege in matters constitutional be looked on with any disfavour at all? The Congress has been called seditious and disloyal—not because it aims at overturning the foundations of British rule in India, for it is patent that its attempts are, on the contrary, directed towards consolidating those foundations—but because it petitions for the rights of the people guaranteed by repeated declaration of the highest authorities, and proposes in case of its success in this country to lay their case before Her Majesty's Government in England, before the British Parliament and before the British nation,

the ultimate Courts of appeal in whose probity and sense of justice and fairplay they have unbounded confidence. To do this effectually the Congress has to discuss questions vitally connected with the well being of the Indian people and to lay their grievances before the bar of English public opinion which otherwise cannot know, or understand those grievances, or grant any redress. Is there anything wrong or unnatural in this procedure ?

It is the law of supply and demand which is a recognised principle in political economy. It is said that it is demand that brings in the supply. Man is so constituted that want is natural to him. When the want is felt the supply comes. Providence thus meets all demands. Even the man of religion has said that there can be no supply without demand. Did not the greatest teacher, the prince of prophets, say "ask and it shall be given unto you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you !" Of course, that is the law of prayer and inspiration in the world of spirit but the same interpreted in the language of flesh means the law of demand and supply. Now, gentlemen, imagine if it is not the law of our Anglo-Indian opponents, the utterances of their acknowledged saviour ? Is it not strange that they should object to our following the footsteps of their own great master ? Is it not unwise and impolitic as well as unchristian of them to oppose the behaviour which "the beloved son of God" commands us to adopt ? Besides this there is a common saying that "the mother does not give milk till the child weeps". What wrong are we doing ? Where is our crime ? We are simply knocking at the door of the great British and Christian nation. We are crying for milk, say even for water before mother England. Is it improper on her part to give us a suckle ? The hungry and thirsty children at her gate, the people of India, the weeping children of mother England, expect nourishment from that great English nation ? We might be alien in race and creed, in manners and customs, ideas and thoughts, but without asking, seeking and knocking hard at the door of our paternal Government we cannot find redress. We should be foremost



to admit that in times past, before we could lisp, we received precious gifts from the hands of the Government, which we still possess and enjoy, but now that we have learnt to articulate it, we are not precluded from praying for better gifts beneficial alike to ourselves and our rulers and also essential for the good government.

The Congress has passed eight years of its existence but what are eight years in the life of a nation? Yet within this brief period it has succeeded in obtaining a few concessions which we highly prize, and these concessions should open the eyes of the wary and suspicious amongst us and encourage us all to persevere in the cause we have taken up for the amelioration of the condition of our country. These concessions prove the generosity of which the British nation is capable and they establish the consolation that if we apply to it for succour in our need, our appeal will not be futile or abortive. Let us then keep steadily the object we have in view, work strenuously in "faith, hope and charity", perfect our organization, strive with all our might to lift our nation from the despondency in which it is immersed and respectfully but firmly approach our rulers for the great good that it is always in their power to confer on us. And let us trust that our rulers will not misunderstand our utterances, nor misjudge our actions but will be considerate and charitable towards us. Give us our just rights, concede our reasonable demands, govern us on principles of equity and good conscience and strengthen the foundations of the Empire by broadbasing it upon the people's will.

The distinguished President of the first and eighth Congresses in his inaugural address at Allahabad last year declared that the second cycle of the Congress began under his presidency. It is a happy coincidence that the second Congress of the second cycle should have been proposed to be held under the leadership of the same illustrious countryman of ours who guided the deliberations of the second Congress of the first cycle. I shall not anticipate your proceedings but nevertheless I cannot help congratulating ourselves on having in our

midst one who has devoted all the talents and energies of a lifetime, with a supreme singleness of purpose, to promoting our cause, and who, by dint of ability, indomitable courage and perseverance, has forced his way to the highest deliberative assembly in the British Empire, the Imperial Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland. I am referring, I need scarcely tell you, to Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, who has inaugurated a new era in Indian political life and whose name now is a household word throughout the length and breadth of this land.

Those who assert that he does not represent the people of India in the House of Commons err grievously. The glorious receptions he has been accorded since his landing at Bombay should suffice to remove their error. All India with one heart accepts his representation, and hopes that immeasurable good will flow from it at no distant date. We must heartily congratulate ourselves on having also in our midst him who first directed our aims and aspirations, guided and controlled our counsels, cheered us in our difficulties, spent large sums of money, abandoned rest and comfort to promote our tottering cause and laid the foundation stone of that grand fabric which now proudly rears its lofty head—I mean our kind, noble, and affectionate friend Mr. Hume, the Father of the Indian National Congress. He has undertaken a long voyage to benefit us, to call us to our sense of duty, to rouse our flagging zeal, to stir up our drooping spirits, to encourage us with his presence and we are particularly fortunate in having the advantage of his guidance, advice and active co-operation at this the first session of the Congress in this province. May he and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji both be spared long to work on behalf of suffering humanity in general and this country in particular !

The business before us in this session is fairly large and I have carefully refrained from touching upon any of the subjects included in it for fear of needlessly encroaching upon your time. Before, however, I conclude, I must ask you to conceive the joy, because it is beyond all power of expression,

which fills my heart at the sight of this great assembly—an assembly consisting of the cream of the Indian community. And I accord you once more a most hearty and cordial welcome to our old historic city.

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In this session 23 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I reiterated the demand of the Congress for democratisation of the Legislative Councils and the representation of Punjab in either Central or Provincial Legislative Council. Resolution II specifically demanded creation of a Legislative Council for the Punjab. Resolution III endorsed the reaffirmation of previous resolutions as those relating to reduction of salt duty, raising of minimum taxable limit to Rs. 1,000 for the purpose of income tax, better implementation of the excise policy, trial by a sessions court of the accused persons in warrant cases, reform of police administration, suitable modification in the rules of the Arms Act, establishment of a Military College in India, and organisation of a system of military services for the war-like races of the country. Resolution IV desired better medical education in India. Resolution V said about the holding of public services examination simultaneously in England and India. Resolution VI desired complete separation of all judicial and executive functions in the Provinces. Resolution VII sought ban on the evils of prostitution and other immoral acts in the cantonment areas. Resolution VIII desired eradication of the evil of starvation. Resolution IX reiterated the stand of the Congress for the sake of better implementation of the Forest Laws. Resolution X demanded no tampering in matters relating to Permanent Settlement of land revenue. Resolution XI regretted that the work of Permanent Settlement had not been completed in some parts of the country. Resolution XII desired more expenditure on higher education, particularly of a technical kind, and reduction of fee in the colleges.

Resolution XIII disfavoured any criticism of the executive about functioning of the judiciary as it would harm people's faith in it. Resolution XIV regretted at the hasty closing of the Indian mints against the private coinage of silver whereby

the people had been subjected to a further burden of indirect taxation. Resolution XV protested against the Exchange Compensation Allowance granted to the undomiciled European and Eurasian employees of Government involving an annual expenditure of more than a crore of rupees. Resolution XVI desired prohibition of forced labour (*begar*) and of forced supplies (*rasads*) that were still prevalent in many parts of the country. Resolution XVII expressed thanks to Lord Northbrook, Secretary of State for India, for his powerful advocacy in the House of Commons for the reduction of the Home Charges of the Government of India. Resolution XVIII desired raising of the status of the Chief Court of the Punjab to that of a Chartered High Court in the interests of the administration of justice there. Resolution XIX once again thanked the voters of Central Finsbury for electing Dadabhai Naoroji as their representative for the House of Commons. Resolution XX said that a sum of Rs. 60,000 be assigned to the British Committee of the Congress for meeting certain expenditures. Resolution XXI reaffirmed thanks of the Congress to Sir William Wedderburn and the members of the British Committee for the valuable services to the cause of India. Resolution XXII reappointed A. O. Hume as the General Secretary of the Congress for the ensuing year. Finally, Resolution XXIII fixed the next session at Madras on a date around Christmas to be decided afterwards.

### *The Tenth Session (1894)*

This session held at Madras marked the close of the first decade of the eventful life of the Indian National Congress. It opened on 26 December and lasted for four days. It was attended by 1,163 delegates—947 from Madras, 132 from Bombay and Sindh, 37 from the C.P., Berar and Secunderabad, 30 from Bengal, 13 from the NWP and Oudh, and 4 from the Punjab. It was the second session held in the city of Madras, earlier one held in 1887. P. Rangiah Naidu delivered the welcome address. After that, Sir Savalal Ramaswami Mudaliar proposed and Raja Rampal Singh seconded the name of Alfred

Webb for the presidency. He chaired this session. This was the third occasion when an Englishman was chosen as the president of the Congress, first at Allahabad in 1888 when George Yule was chosen and then at Bombay in 1890 when this honour was given to Sir William Wedderburn. It showed that the leaders of the Congress were very keen to dispel any charge about the disloyal or seditious character of their national organisation.

### **INFLUENCE GROWS, OPPOSITION GROWS\***

My Brother Delegates and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Reception Committee of the Tenth Indian National Congress and on behalf of the Indian community of Southern India generally, I offer you my most cordial greetings and welcome you to our city.

Seven years ago when Madras had the privilege of witnessing the third Session of the Congress, the position that I now so unworthily fill was filled by that illustrious Indian Statesman, the late Rajah Sir T. Madhava Row, K.C.S.I., who described the Congress as the "soundest triumph of British administration and a crown of glory to the British nation" and whose death and that of Pandit Ajudhya Nath and other conspicuous figures in our ranks have vacated places not yet adequately filled. But patriots and statesmen have to pay the debt of nature, and what we have lost in individual strength we hope we have been able to make good by increased intensity and extent of national feeling. Our organization in every part of the country has improved in influence and solidarity; it has extended to orders of society below the middle class; has roused the attention of our British fellow subjects; and, what is more significant of its influence, has provoked the envy and anger of a certain section of the Anglo-Indian community.

\*Address delivered by P. Rangiah Naidu, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Madras Congress, held in December, 1894.

In the vast concourse of people which we behold assembled under this beautiful pavilion, in the thousand and more delegates of position and rank come from North and South and East and West of this great Continent, in the festive joy that the celebration of this national occasion communicates at this moment to almost every house in this city, in the hundreds of meetings attended by thousands of people that have been held all over South India during the last six months, held not in cities and towns merely but even in villages and hamlets, to further the national cause, and in the numberless small and big channels through which money has flowed into the Congress coffers, a system of collection from house to house having been universally adopted by our Committees, by which the prince and peasant, the merchant and trader, the petty artisan and labourer, have been brought under contribution—you will see in all these, Gentlemen, the complete falsification of malicious predictions and the frustration of impotent envy, as well as the gradual maturing of the consummation of the forces which this movement embodies and attests, and which bind us all together in common fellow-feeling and in common devotion to our revered sovereign.

The political horizon of the educated Indian citizen is no longer his village or district, not even the capital city of his province, but it is now the whole Indian continent, a substitution which is so favourable to the growth of enlightened patriotism. Whether this process of the enlargement of our political vision will lead at length to a welding into a united and unified whole of the different sections of the population, as we hope and believe it will, or whether the consummation will be, as some of our well-wishers assert, a federal and peaceful association of them all, is a question which must be left to the future to solve. As a practical body, as a movement having certain tangible and immediate ends in view and striving to supply wants actually felt, and as an enterprise carefully steering clear of all visionary and merely sentimental objects, it is not the business of the Congress to devote itself to aims which are not within its reach and which will more properly engage the efforts.

of posterity. Nor is it our object to disregard the law of continuity in evolution, to break from old moorings, and to launch into a work of destruction and reconstruction. We most emphatically repudiate therefore that visionary and revolutionary character with which our enemies have endowed our movement, and claim for it a thoroughly practical and legitimate character, and a character sincerely loyal to all these elements in the British rule which are conservative as well as progressive.

We take our stand on the Proclamation of 1858, which we hold is the charter of our political liberties and is binding for all time to come on the representatives of the British sovereignty in this country to the same extent and in the same sense as those charters that the English nation, by their intense love of freedom and robust political spirit, have wrung from time to time from their unwilling and tyrannical sovereigns. Aye, Gentlemen, our charter is even more binding—if indeed there can be any difference of degree in the obligation of pledges given—because, while the concessions to the British nation were made under circumstances of a more or less coercive character, Her Majesty had represented political principles and traditions different from those of England, would have furnished justification for less calmness, generosity and wisdom than so graciously inspired that immortal document. Gentlemen, we have been told recently by the highest official authorities that the Proclamation conveyed no pledges whatever to the people of this country, and that political expediency, as understood by the men in power for the time being, was the only criterion determining the obligations of the rulers to the ruled. Well, all I can say is, that this is a most unfair and perverse view to take, a view that would certainly sully the honour of the Empress and her responsible servants, would contradict the noblest traditions of British rule, and injure the best and the most abiding interests of the whole Indian Empire. You may remember, Gentlemen, what Her Majesty told Lord Derby when the Proclamation was being drafted. The noble lady that she is, the paragon of all feminine and royal virtues,

may God prolong her life, and may her rule in India last as long as do the sun and moon—she exhorted him to remember that “it was a female sovereign who spoke to more than a hundred millions of Eastern people on assuming the direct Government over them and after a bloody civil war, giving them pledges (mark the words, Gentlemen !) “which her future reign was to redeem, and explaining the principles of her Government”. Knowing thus the true meaning of the Proclamation, let those who will, deny it, but until the Proclamation is formally withdrawn and the sovereign of Great Britain and India formally announces that neither Justice, nor Truth, nor Integrity is the dominant guiding principle of British Indian rule, but that this principle is expediency, and expediency alone, as may be understood by the Viceroy or the Secretary of State for India for the time being—until then the people of this country will take their stand on that most cherished charter of theirs and demand with confidence and determination the fulfilment of their legitimate, loyal and honourable aspirations.

We may derive satisfaction however from the belief that this attempt to belittle the importance of the Proclamation is confined to those Englishmen who are interested in the perpetuation of the present administrative system, and that the English nation, as a whole, including the responsible guardians of their imperial interests, will strongly disapprove of the attempt to uphold the ascendancy of a limited class of Her Majesty's subjects in disregard of her own deliberate and repeated pledges and of the contentment and prosperity of the Indian people so truly and dearly loved by her. But to convince the English people that such an attempt is being made and that the selfishness of the bureaucracy is the most dangerous enemy of the British Indian Empire, is our chief difficulty. Yes, Gentlemen, the Indian bureaucracy is selfish. I say that most deliberately, and the history of the last 35 years is my justification for saying so. It is for this reason that we have thought it necessary to strengthen our organization in England and to educate public opinion there, as well as to continue with unabated vigour and enthusiasm our work in this country.



As was to be expected, this policy has borne fruit. We have secured the sympathy of a large number of Members of Parliament, while the English press no longer affects silent contempt, although misrepresentation as well as sympathy distinguishes its criticisms. It behoves us therefore, Gentlemen, to strengthen as much as possible the hands of the British Congress Committee and of our other friends. We are very anxious to draw closer the tie of sympathy between us and our English friends and rouse greater interest in that country on behalf of our movement. It was this aspect of the situation that induced us to invite a member of Parliament to preside over our deliberations, and on our having been able to secure you, Sir—Mr. Alfred Webb, through your truly patriotic and condescending fellow feeling, we have every reason to congratulate ourselves. Through you we are confident of enlisting the sympathy of a very important section of the House of Commons as well as of those true sons of Britain whose generosity and sense of justice are, like their love of freedom, of world-wide celebrity.

We are at present, more than we ever were, in need of the support of British public opinion, because in proportion as our agitation acquires prestige and grows in influence, so does the opposition in this country grow strong. Of this opposition you have been a remarkable proof in the latest official contribution to the literature on the Simultaneous Examinations question. The Parliamentary Blue Book on that question marks, I fear, a further straining of the relations between educated Indians and the officials, from which latter nothing but abuse, misrepresentation and determined opposition are, it would seem, hereafter to be expected even in our most moderate attempts at self-improvement. They would seem to have persuaded themselves into the belief that to have established English Schools and Colleges is the greatest mistake of British rule in India, and that inasmuch as their abolition is out of the question, the next best thing, from their point of view, is to cry down the men educated in these institutions, call them names, and characterise them as a class of disloyal men, devoid of influence with their own countrymen, and incapable

of discharging any responsible public duty. Our Anglo-Indian friends speak as if nothing good can come out of the people for whose education the State expends as much as a crore of rupees every year. They seem to be almost ashamed of their own literature, of the teachers and professors of their own nationality, and enamoured of ignorance and superstition as the best mental state of the Indian people. I have no doubt that this Blue Book, so disappointing and so retrograde and so unworthy of the Englishman's reputation for fair dealing, will be subjected to severe criticism in the course of our proceedings. And I merely refer to it here to show what amount and what kind of opposition we should be prepared for in this country before our objects are attained.

To abuse the opponent is a favourite from the argument with a certain description of people, and failing to meet us with fair reasoning or on the ground of justice or political wisdom, the opponents of the Congress, that is, of educated Indians call us disloyal, and attribute to us revolutionary designs. Gentlemen, with mad men and with people who talk wildly under the exciting sense of losing interests, we have no concern. If there be any reasonable persons amongst our opponents, I should like to take them into my confidence and ask them why they think we are disloyal. If a rule which has established peace, order and security in the country, which administers justice as impartially as human tribunals can do, which constantly stimulates material prosperity, which has conferred on the people the inestimable blessing of Education, liberty of conscience and freedom of discussion, and of which, indeed, the possibilities for future good are even greater than what has actually been done in the past—if such a rule cannot excite the loyal attachment of the people, I am at a loss to know what kind of rule may be expected to excite their loyalty. Gentlemen, the fact is, the persons that charge us with disloyalty are the victims of their own guilty conscience, of some evil thought concealed in their minds, and it is only such persons that see disloyalty everywhere, and, like Macbeth, perceive a dagger in the air. Nor is it anything but the most ludicrous

absurdity to see disloyalty in political agitation conducted on strictly constitutional lines and in a spirit of confidence in the rulers. What is the good of the education and freedom that have been vouchsafed to us if we do not make use of them for our own improvement. We have no desire but to live on terms of the utmost amity and regard with our Anglo-Indian fellow-subjects. We feel we want their guidance and their sympathy which, whenever shown, we have most sincerely and unstintingly reciprocated.

At no time were our best efforts more needed than they are now. Our country is passing through a period of crisis, which crisis will endure, I am afraid, in a more or less acute form, until India survives her present transition state and finds its fit place in the international system of the world. Not only the principles of Government, but the system of trade and industry, the provision for the security of the country, and the burden of the tax-payer himself, no longer depend on the needs and capacity of the country, but on the politics of Europe, and, regard being had to India's inability to bear the strain of this anomalous relation and to her limited resources, it behoves all responsible for her well-being to exercise the utmost care to husband and develop carefully those resources and save the country from possible disaster. An absentee Government involves a frightful drain on the country's financial resources, an overgrown military system absorbs one-third of the net revenue, the free trade principles thrust upon us have destroyed the old industries, the population has grown in advance of the food supply, and poverty is increasing from year to year.

This is not all. There is a growing reluctance on the part of the Government to grapple with the problems arising from these evils, to do strict justice to the people whenever their interests clash with those of the ruling country, and to meet public opinion in a spirit of sympathy and confidence. We have also to reckon with a new evil that is rapidly coming to the front and threatens serious results, I mean, the evil of a hostile Anglo-Indian opinion which, powerful as it must always

be, is ceasing more and more to represent that of the responsible official class, but echoes to an increasing extent the self-interest, the prejudices and passing feelings of those Englishmen who come here merely to earn their livelihood, who have no permanent stake in the country, and whose opinions on Indian matters do not always possess ; for their soundness, the guarantee of education, enlightened patriotism, or past tradition and future fame. I need not say that this change in the constitution of Anglo-Indian opinion has made itself rather inconveniently manifest of late, and I am not sure that it has not controlled the decisions even of the Government. Consequently, discontent, irritation and a certain restlessness have seized the people, and the feeling between the ruling and ruled communities is not all that is desirable. Gentlemen, these are some of the evils of the present situation, and I am confident that the issue of our deliberations will show a due estimate of these evils and will suggest adequate and practical remedies.

There has been, indeed, a good deal of disappointment. The decision of the Secretary of State for India on the Simultaneous Examinations question and the extraordinary grounds on which that decision is based, have shaken our confidence in the liberal professions of the party in power. Indeed nothing can be more disheartening than that a Resolution of the House of Commons should be contemptuously set aside by the Indian bureaucracy. The scheme of the Provincial Civil Service has proved an extremely unsatisfactory measure. The reformed Legislative Councils have failed to furnish an effective and adequate means of obtaining official recognition for non-official public opinion. The system of criminal administration has not been improved. Our demand for a Parliamentary inquiry into the affairs of our country, though it was about to be granted in 1884, has since been rejected as unpractical and undesirable. No steps have been taken to reduce the excessive military and civil expenditure of Government. And, lastly, Indian public opinion has failed to prevent the appropriation of over a crore of rupees for a virtual increase in the salaries of the Government's European employees.

Still, by the side of these disappointments is the encouraging fact that our aims and demands are now known and approved to a wider extent by public opinion in the United Kingdom as well as in India, and that in regard to some particular matters the Government have moved sympathetically. An influential party of members of Parliament pledged to sympathy with our aspirations—if not to an actual support of our particular demands—has been organized. Our British Committee has been strengthened and has been able to do better and more work. And even such a typical bureaucrat as Sir Auckland Colvin, not to speak of Sir David Barbour and Mr. Samuel Laing, has admitted that the chief cause of all the financial woes of the Indian Government is to be traced more to the system of Government than to a depreciated currency, or to the other temporary causes, in which official timidity, in the face of large and inconvenient problems, is apt to take shelter. How is it, may I ask, Gentlemen, that it took nine years of ceaseless agitation by the Congress before the financial advisers of our Government could muster up courage to admit this fact—a fact which was but too patent to all disinterested minds! Let all who will, affect contempt for us—it is enough if we are able to convert our officials as we have been able to convert Sir Auckland Colvin and Sir David Barbour.

Another important victory in our campaign is the admission we have obtained from Lord Cross and Lord Kimberley, besides other eminent authorities, that the combination of executive and judicial functions in the same officer is a serious evil and that it is only the want of necessary funds that stands in the way of the evil being remedied. In the administration of the Forest department a policy of regard for the interests of the agricultural population has been enunciated, though whether such a policy will be given effect to by local officers will depend on the watchfulness of our press and our public bodies as well as on the local Governments. In the police department measures for the promotion of native Inspectors to higher offices, till now reserved for Europeans, are being

matured. I am hopeful that other reforms will follow in due course on the lines of the Congress !

There can be no doubt that, although after the first few years the Congress as a great patriotic enterprise lost the attractions of novelty, it has lost no portion of its influence on the intelligent classes of the community as the only institution calling into play what resources of public spirit exist in the country and imparting weight and dignity to such non-official Indian opinion as gives itself expression from time to time. Nothing proves this fact better than the unprecedented outburst of enthusiasm throughout Southern India when the preparations for this Congress were set on foot in the middle of the year. The Reception Committee was formed in the month of August, and immediately our energetic Secretaries sent forth their shafts of circulars to pierce the pent-up enthusiasm of our *mofussil* friends, with the result that a degree of activity and disinterested cooperation sprang up everywhere ; every nook and corner was permeated with the Congress enthusiasm, meetings were held, committees were formed, old organizations were revived, apathetic places were shamed into activity, private grudges were forgotten, jealousies disappeared, a very salutary spirit of emulation came upon every little community, and at length what appeared to be a colossal and burdensome task, the task of arranging for your satisfactory reception and for the conduct of business by the Congress itself, has been gone through with astonishing ease, with absence of friction, and with that most wholesome of all pleasures, the pleasure of excitement in the discharge of a serious public duty.

The most remarkable feature in the work of our organization this time was the system of raising the necessary funds by appealing for help to every house and every place of business in the locality, a system which, first started in the city of Madras, was immediately adopted in every centre of Congress activity in all the districts of the province. The Reception Committee has collected till now nearly 40,000 rupees, of

which nearly if not more than half was collected in exceedingly small amounts, in the shape of single rupees, of annas and pies. It is by no means an uncommendable spirit, I may observe, for men of respectable position, accustomed to command and brought up in the comforts of comparative affluence, to go about the streets every day, both morning and evening, entering and quitting house after house, explaining the objects and advantages of the Congress movement and its claim on the help of the masses however small, and doing all this without feeling their pride wounded or dignity compromised, and it is a spirit in strange contrast to that of individuals, not touched by the quality of self-sacrifice fostered by the Congress activity. What is singularly encouraging, the uneducated poor man gave us willingly as the educated man of the middle class. If there are persons amongst our own countrymen who cannot comprehend the educative influence, in the highest sense, of such a movement, not to speak of the demands for political concession that it directly makes, we can only pity their short-sightedness and pray that it may soon be replaced by good sense and far-seeing patriotism.

We do not conceal from ourselves the fact that an important section of our Muslim fellow countrymen have stood aloof from our movement under the mistaken impression that it is disliked by the powers that-be, and that not to join such a movement, to denounce it, and to actually oppose it, is the surest passport to Government's favour and official advancement. But the time is gone, altogether gone, when subserviency to official power can play the role of real merit and win admission to the public service, and our deluded fellow countrymen are just now discovering that the game is after all not paying, and that in these days no community gets a hearing for its representations, especially when the governing power is vested in the hands of foreigners, unless those representations are backed up by a powerful and organized agitation. Educational Conferences are accordingly being organized, political societies are being established, and whispers of discontent are being heard—all showing that soon our

Mohammedan fellow countrymen, though they may not all join the Congress, will press their claims by public agitation on lines parallel to our own. They are quite welcome to this method and we shall most cordially wish them success. They cannot have claims different from our own or claims with which we of the Indian National Congress do not fully and warmly sympathize.

Only, let every community in India, the Mohammedan as well as the Hindu, the Parsee and the Native Christian, which wants to perpetuate itself, to preserve its national vitality in a healthy and unimpaired state, and to prevent seeds of decay from lodging themselves in the core and eventually poisoning the whole body politic, read aright the lessons of the past and of contemporaneous history. The nation that understands the change in the spirit of the age, and, quickened with the inspiration of national unity and greatness, adapts its institutions and appliances to the new conditions, beats in the struggle the rival, who, cherishing with strange fatality his stolid conservatism and uninspiring recollections of the past, refuses to change, neglects national consolidation and rejects the suggestions of modern needs, and whose leaders are men regarding individual fortunes as of greater account than the interests and honour of the commonwealth.

Gentlemen, I have detained you too long. But before concluding I should like to take this opportunity of tendering, on behalf of the Reception Committee, my most heartfelt thanks to Colonel G.M.J. Moore, *i.e.*, the President of the Madras Municipality, for the readiness with which he has rendered help to our Committee in providing the necessary comforts for the delegates, in making the required sanitary arrangements in the various camps, and in securing their convenience in various other ways, and, in short, for his not having been content with doing what a President of the local corporation might be ordinarily expected to do.

Gentlemen, this is a moment when we all feel that a great dream, a dream which in other times and places rulers and



statesmen have dreamed in vain—the dream of the unity of the Indian people—is about to be realized. At such a moment nothing but good ideas and pure aspirations occupy our minds, and the heart overflows with genuine goodwill and brotherly feeling. In the name of those who have cooperated in the organization of this Congress, in the name of the people of Madras and Southern India generally, I once more offer you my most cordial greetings. We receive you with open arms and extend to you the right hand of fellowship for having so kindly and so condescendingly responded to our invitation.

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In this session 27 resolutions were passed. Resolution I protested against the injustice and impolicy of imposing excise duty on cottons manufactured in British India. Resolution II reiterated the demand of the Congress for completing the work of Permanent Settlement in India. Resolution III urged eradication of poverty of the country. Resolution IV desired abolition of the Council of the Secretary of State for India. Resolution V sought an enquiry into the financial expenditure of India. Resolution VI repeated the demand of the Congress for the Indianisation of public services and holding of the ICS examination simultaneously in England and India. Resolution VII said about the method of the recruitment of the judges. Resolution VIII said about better arrangement of medical services in the country. Resolution IX repeated the stand of the Congress for the creation of a Legislative Council in the Punjab. Resolution X contained a note of condolence on the death of the Raja of Mysore. Resolution XI restressed demand of the Congress for the system of trial by jury. Resolution XII reiterated the stand of the Congress for separation of judiciary and executive. Resolution XIII demanded a High Court for the Punjab.

Resolution XIV desired cut in the home and military expenditure of the Government of India. Resolution XV desired more facilities for higher education in the country. Resolution XVI reaffirmed previous resolutions of the Congress as reduction of salt duty, raising of income tax limit from 500 to

1,000 rupees, trial of the accused persons in warrant cases by a sessions court, reform in police administration, suitable modification of the rules of the Arms Act, establishment of Military Colleges in India, organisation of military services for war-like races of the Empire, discontinuance of the Exchange Compensation Allowance, better control in the cantonment areas to prevent the evils of prostitution and other immoral actions. Resolution XVII said that some provisions of the Police Act of 1861 empowering the District Magistrates to levy the costs of punitive police and of granting compensation were of a most arbitrary and dangerous character. Resolution XVIII repeated the demand of the Congress for a fair implementation of the Forest Laws. Resolution XIX protested against gagging of the press in Native States. Resolution XX protested against the imposition of water cess. Resolution XXI requested the British Government not to make a law to disenfranchise the Indian people residing in South African Colonies. Resolution XXII said about the presentation of these resolutions to the Secretary of State for India by eminent persons belonging to different provinces of the country. Resolution XXIII said that a sum of Rs. 60,000 be assigned to the British Committee for meeting certain expenses. Resolution XXIV thankfully acknowledged the services rendered by Sir William Wedderburn and other members of the British Committee for their services to India. Resolution XXV said about the reappointment of A.O. Hume as the General Secretary of the Congress for the ensuing year. Resolution XXVI fixed the next session at Poona on a date, around Christmas next year, to be decided afterwards. Finally, Resolution XXVII had its own importance. It said about the setting up of a committee for drafting rules and regulations of the Constitution of the Congress.

By this time the national organisation of India could complete a life of first ten years. During this phase it remained in the hands of those leaders who subscribed to Hume's doctrine of keeping Congress as a safety-valve of the British Empire. It could well meet the attack posed by a section of the Muslim

intelligentsia and lately of the British bureaucracy. It moved ahead on the path of progress showing that the movement could not be pushed back by the mischevious propaganda of its opponents. The liberal leaders carefully watched every development and could reinforce the impression that it was a loyal organisation. The election of the three Englishmen for the highest post of the organisation was a bold demonstration of this stand. On certain occasions it was thought to hold the next session of about 100 delegates in England, but the idea could not materialise owing to many insurmountable difficulties. The Congress could regulate the procedure of the selection of the delegates from various provinces of the country so as to meet the problem of growing rush of the participants. At this session it could also set up a committee for drafting the rules and regulations of its Constitution. It was, therefore, well noted by the authors of the official report : "Amid scenes of enthusiasm which only belong to a great and popular cause, the Tenth Indian National Congress successfully accomplished the yearly task of placing before an increasingly attentive public the need for reform and the need for redress of grievances in the Indian Empire. In four days of exemplary application to the work in hand much sound commonsense, much political sagacity, much eloquence of a high order was brought to bear upon the pressing problems of modern India."

### 3

## CONGRESS—ON THE PATH OF CONSTITUTIONAL STRUGGLE

After completing a life of ten years, the Congress manifestly developed its national character. The proceedings of the sessions of the next decade (1895-1904) leave this strong impression that the liberal leaders sworn to follow the line of 'sane and loyal nationalism', as conceived by Hume, gained the courage of conviction in criticising, though in mild terms, the pitfalls of the British bureaucratic rule by invoking the celebrated norms of the rule of law. They could well defeat the critical allegations of the Muslim isolationists and communalists who were harping on the theme of keeping their co-religionists aloof from the national mainstream. This trend grew more and more powerful. It looked so formidable to Viceroy Lord Curzon that he accused Dufferin of committing a 'blunder' by blessing the creation of this organisation and revealed his nasty desire to see its 'peaceful demise'. However, his misrule added to the strength of the Congress and it came to have its manifestation in its frankly taking to the path of constitutional struggle for *swaraj* (freedom). The emergence of a more vocal and volatile section of the leaders (called the Extremists) and endorsement of Tilak's call of 'swaraj as the birth-right of the people' revealed that by this time the Congress had by all means become a truly national organisation.

### *The Eleventh Session (1895)*

This session opened in the city of Poona on 27 December and continued for three days. It was attended by 1,584 delegates—1,257 from Bombay and Sindh, 131 from the Central Provinces and Berar, 118 from Madras, 51 from

Bengal, 24 from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, and 3 from the Punjab. Rao Bahadur V.M. Bhide was the Chairman of the Reception Committee, but he requested Prof. G.K. Gokhale to read out his address written for this occasion as he was too old and an ailing person. After this, P. Anand Charlu proposed and Dr. K.N. Bahadurji seconded the name of Surendranath Banerjea for the presidentship and he was elected by loud acclamation.

### **A CALL FOR ACTION\***

Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Reception Committee and the general public of this Presidency, I offer to you all a most cordial welcome to this ancient and historical city, where we have now met under this roof to inaugurate the sittings of the 11th session of the Indian National Congress. There is a peculiar propriety in our meeting together here on this occasion. Such of you, as have been privileged to labour in this great national cause for the last 10 years and more, know full well that it was in Poona that our General Secretary first discussed the scheme of the National Congress with his native friends, and it was in this city that its first sitting was to have taken place in December 1885. Untoward circumstances, however, interfered with that arrangement, and at the eleventh hour the meeting had to be transferred to Bombay. After having completed its first cycle of ten years' existence, the Congress now enters upon a fresh cycle of another ten years of useful activity, as a great instrument of political education, welding together all the various races and creeds of India into a great and glorious whole, destined under Providence to take its rank among the foremost nations of the world. The welding

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\*Rao Bahadur V.M. Bhide was the Chairman of the Reception Committee for the Poona session held in December, 1895. As he was a very old and ailing man of 70 years, he spoke just a few words and then asked Prof. G.K. Gokhale to read out his address written for this occasion.

process is always a work of time, and implies a long course of heating and hammering and this process of heating and hammering has to be repeated times out of number, before the union is completed. The hammering is done for us under Providence by great extraneous agencies, represented by the supremacy of a militant civilisation and literature which will allow us no rest and no seclusion from the outside world, but will force us to take our place in the race of material improvement, in which it deservedly occupies the foremost position. Not all the hammering in the world, however, can accomplish the full results of the welding process, unless it is accompanied by a responsive generation of internal heat, without which the outside forces would only splinter us to pieces, as has been unfortunately the case in many other parts of the world, where old civilisations have crumbled down and never learnt to raise their head again.

Even in our own days, in these last years of the 19th century, we have before us the spectacle of a great Mohammedan power in Europe and a great Mongolian power in Asia unable to retain their places from sheer inability to generate the heat, without which the outside influences can never work to any good account. A hundred years ago, the city, where we now meet, was the centre of a Native confederacy of powers, which held together the whole continent of India from the foot of the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, and from Dwarka in the West to Cuttack in the East. And appeared at one time well able to dispute on equal terms the place of supremacy with the great European power which had established itself in the lower Gangetic Valley and on the Coromandel Coast. You all know what change a hundred years have effected. The moral union among even the stronger races that inhabit India was of such a loose and unorganised character that it gave way at all points when the struggle commenced in right earnest.

If after a hundred years we had stood in no better position than we did then in regard to these moral forces which tend to

union and strength is union, our condition would be hopeless indeed. Fortunately for us, our affairs have been entrusted to the safe keeping of a power which has won a world-wide reputation as the mother of great nations and the liberator of mankind. Brought up under such a discipline, which, while it strikes gently and lends its helping hand to all who aspire to rise again, we have benefited by the education that we receive and by the material civilisation which annihilates time and distance, and brings us together to feel a common interest in our own elevation under the vivifying influence of a literature and a history, the like of which the world has not known in the past for its triumphs in the emancipation of mankind. The meetings of this Congress represent the highest triumph of the influences that have been at work for fifty years and more and it is for us to respond to this noble call in a way worthy of the place we occupy in the world's history.

I know there are those among our critics who dispute the truth of this position and proclaim with an air of superior wisdom that India is but a geographical expression and that there is no Indian nation as such, but only a congeries of nations, races and creeds, who have no cohesion in them and are only prevented from throttling each other by the fear of the Pax Britannica which rules over us all. At times indeed we do present in our internal quarrels about trifles a humiliating spectacle which provokes this scorn and ridicule of nations better circumstanced than ourselves. But I feel that with the magnificent spectacle we now see before us, you will agree with me in thinking that these temporary aberrations do not represent our true condition, and that the races and creeds in India have learnt to love and respect each other, and to work together for their common elevation. Here in this gathering we have representatives from the most distant provinces, Bengal, Assam, Punjab, N.W. Provinces, Rajputana, Sindh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Carnatic, Telangana, and the Dravid country. Nobody forces us to come together from all these distant places, and nothing but a common spark of heavenly fire could animate so many of the best and noblest of the land to sacrifice

time, money and convenience and testify by their presence in these gatherings from year to year that they are determined to forget all their differences and do all that is in their power to build up the great Indian Nation, which has been their aspiration by day and dream by night, and which, if not fulfilled before their eyes, will certainly be accomplished in the near future.

All the elements which go to make a common united nation are now present with us ; a common political citizenship, a common loyalty to the Queen-Empress, a community of interests, under the influence of which no part can thrive or suffer without the whole sharing in the prosperity of misfortune, and a common language and literature which binds us morally and spiritually together and connects us with the wider world outside. Differences of race and creed there still exist, but they are getting more and more tolerant of each other, and less angular every day, and it is the function of the National Congress, its chief and most glorious function, to induce in all the electric current of enlightenment, which will hasten the union and make it strong to bear the strain which time may place upon it. The watchword of the Congressmen is Indians first, Hindoos, Muslims, Parsees, Christians, Panjabees, Mahrattas, Bengalees, and Madrasees afterwards. It is for us by the moderation and business-like character of our deliberations, by our mutual toleration of each other's feelings and prejudices, to justify in act and word the hopes and aspirations of those, who, in the not distant future, seek to realise the dream of a united and federated India, resting secure in its loyal dependence on the great British Nation and able to lead the nations of Asia in the path of progressive advancement in all directions of human activity.

I have said that the welding process is a process of hard hammering and heating. We should not delude ourselves with the thought that things will be made easy for us and that we could enter upon this new inheritance until we are regenerated, and our sins in the past have been washed out in the tears that



burn with repentance. Our whole nature has to be purified and elevated by constant struggles with injustice in ourselves and others. Many people among us do not sufficiently realise how hard this struggle is naturally bound to be. They seem to imagine that we can pass from the old world to the new, pass from the dominion of custom and status to one of individual freedom and responsibility, from a fond clinging to the past to an earnest confidence in the future, from obedience to force to an appreciation of self-imposed law, in fact from a narrow cast-iron type of life to a freer and more liberalised form of existence, without budging an inch or sacrificing anything. The sooner they abandon visions such as these, the better will it be for them and for us all. There will be struggles, our consciences accusing and excusing night and day, castes and creeds in conflict with one another in endless directions. Such struggles are inevitable and people who are put out by the first signs of such differences are not the men from whom we can expect success in such high tasks.

The process of fusion always requires and develops a great amount of heat. The heat of controversy is only a form of such struggle for self-improvement. Already the struggle has commenced in earnest, and though it is a most unpleasant experience to those who have to take part in it, we have to reconcile ourselves to its inevitable necessity. Compromises and adjustments are practical lessons which can only be learnt usefully and become parts of our second nature—habit—when we are earnestly engaged in a war of principle. As the Chairman of the Reception Committee, it is not for me to enter more into the history of our recent experiences in Poona. I can, however, assure you, brother-delegates, that if the struggle was keener here than elsewhere, it was due to the fact that on both sides there was an earnest desire to make this Congress gathering as great a success as any that preceded it. How far we have succeeded in giving you all a cordial welcome, and providing for your comforts and conveniences is more than I can say at present with confidence. This much is certain that this gathering of delegates is one of the largest that have

hitherto taken place. We see assembled here the representatives of all the races, classes and creeds that inhabit this vast country. They come from all provinces and I can only hope that our actual success in the arrangements adopted here will not fall far short of what we desire. The last Congress gave a commission to the Poona Committee to frame a draft constitution which will give some stability to our organisation and provide for its permanence. The Committee have accordingly prepared such a draft. I trust it will receive due consideration at the hands of this Congress. The necessity for some written code like this is becoming every day more and more apparent and it is hoped that our labours in this respect will commend themselves to you all.

Our Mohammedan friends in this town have, as in some other places, held aloof, but it is a matter of great satisfaction to us to find that this organised attempt to stand aloof is entirely confined to this city, and that the Mohammedans of other places have more or less cordially co-operated with their Hindu brethren in this national work. Even our local Mohammedan friends, who have held aloof, have found it necessary to formulate their reasons for so doing. This is a welcome change, as it makes the question not one of feeling but one of reasonableness, with which argument is possible, and further discussion may lead to a change of conviction. It is urged by our Poona Mohammedan friends that the Congress does not represent adequately all the races of India. This statement is itself a great concession, because the fact of representation is not denied, but the question is narrowed to a consideration of its adequacy.

The proportions are not certainly adequate in regard to the population test, but judged by the test of the spread of English education, the adequacy will not seem to be very far from the true numbers. Besides what defect exists in this respect will be most satisfactorily removed by Mohammedans sending more representatives to the Congress. The second reason assigned is difficult to deal with. Even the bitterest enemies of the Congress do not now venture to question the honesty of the motives which

lead so many men from all provinces to cast in their lot with its success. Its wisdom has been questioned. Its practical usefulness might be improved, but there is only one opinion now that it is an honest, spontaneous, native Indian effort to co-operate loyally with the British rulers of the land, by setting forth the non-official view on all the great questions of the day which engage public attention. Great British statesmen have always been anxious to see such an organization spring up in the land. Lord Ripon paved the way for it by his local and municipal reforms. Lord Lansdowne assigned a distinct constitutional function to the Congress.

It is not necessary, therefore, to dwell further on this reason which has been assigned by our Mohammedan friends in justification of their position. The third reason has more force in it. But every year the Congress programme of work has shown improvement on its practical side, and the leading Bombay organs have especially noted this feature, as a hopeful characteristic of this year's work. The note and the resolutions issued by the Reception Committee will be the best answer to this charge that we can give for the present. The fourth reason assigned is that the Congress is not important enough to deal satisfactorily with the subjects it takes up. This is, however, a defect for which the responsibility is on other shoulders. It rests with the Government to utilise this vast force of public opinion, and I feel sure a day will come when such a recognition will be cordially extended to it. The rulers in the land have recognized its value by undertaking some of the reforms which it has striven for. They no doubt are waiting to see that it strikes its roots deeper in the soil, and when they recognize it as a part of their deliberative machinery, the Congress will naturally be enabled to claim the full measure of the importance to which its title at present may, to some, appear inadequate. The fifth reason assigned is one, which, in our opinion, calls for no answer. The Congress meets and deliberates from a faith in the capacity and willingness of Government to do all that it can to promote material prosperity, and raise the general condition of the people of India.

If this were not its faith, it would not meet from year to year. If it meets as it has been doing, it is because it wishes to co-operate with Government in this work. The question is not what Government is doing, but how we respond to the call it makes on us. If Government errs, it errs from ignorance, from want of touch with the people, from differences of language, race and creed, from variation in its stand-point, which cannot be the stand-point of the millions under its rule. It is to supply this want that it becomes the duty of the people to organise themselves and give voice to public opinion. The last argument of an appeal to the Koran is an argument which begs the whole question at issue and the Mohammedans of other parts have shown by their attendance here that they do not desire to transfer their responsibility for inaction in the matter to their scriptures. These explanations, it is hoped, will satisfy our Musalman friends in Poona that their position is untenable, and will secure more sympathetic action on their part in future.

The large number of delegates that have attended this gathering, the fact that a small city like ours has been able to undertake this national work which has taxed the energies of much larger presidency towns, the earnestness, which, notwithstanding our differences, has animated the people of the Deccan to put forth all their energies, the desire on the part of our Mohammedan friends to take their stand on argument and not merely on feeling—these are elements of hope and satisfaction. The ideas represented by the Congress programme must filter from the higher to the lower strata of society, and the lead that Poona has taken in this matter justifies the hope that Patna and Lucknow, Benaras and Cawnpore, Delhi and Amritsar, Ahmedabad and Karachi, will now come to the relief of the presidency towns, which alone have till now borne this great annual charge. More satisfactory than all these elements of hope and progress—considered from the stand-point of the success of the present session—is, however, the choice that we have made this year for the office of the President of the 11th Congress. The Hon'ble Mr. Surendra Nath

Banerji joins in himself all that is good and enlightened in young and in old India. He is pre-eminently a man of work, working in a profession which is the peculiar privilege of the Brahmin community to which he belongs, and working at it with a zeal and energy that has won for him the foremost place in the heart of what may well be called the hope and blossom of coming years,—the hearts of many thousands of students in all parts of the country. He has been a Congressman ever since its birth, and he has laboured for it both day and night, both here and in England, with a success that is borne witness to, by the approval of the entire nation. Under such guidance, this year's session is bound to be a conspicuous success.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am now an old man past three score years and ten, the allotted span of human life. I remember the time when English education first commenced in this city, and I was one of the first recipients of that education. Fifty years have since then passed, and during all these years, I have tried to be an humble worker in all fields of progressive activity. I feel I have not lived in vain, when I see before me the dream of my younger years realized in being privileged to take part in such an assemblage as this. Ladies and gentlemen, I now request you to proceed with the formal election of your President.

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In this session 26 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I said that the draft constitution of the Congress be circulated to the Standing Committees for their consideration. Resolution II desired that the Royal Commission on Expenditure should also look into the policy that regulated the mode of expenditure of the Government and that its sittings be open for the public. Resolution III desired cut in military expenditure as well as in the Home Charges. Resolution IV reiterated the demand of the Congress for separation of executive and judiciary. Resolution V reiterated its demand for trial by jury of persons accused in the warrant cases. Resolution VI reaffirmed the demand for removal of restrictions on

the freedom of press in Native States. Resolution VII repeated demand for the Indianisation of the public services and holding of ICS examination simultaneously in England and India. Resolution VIII said that if the British Government desired to pursue its forward policy, the expenses on the military should be borne by England and India jointly. Resolution IX desired abolition of disabilities on the Indian Settlers in South Africa. Resolution X urged removal of the evil of agricultural indebtedness. Resolution XI desired that the members of the Legislative Councils should be given right to interpellation. Resolution XII said about bettering the condition of civil and military services. Resolution XIII said about amending the Legal Practitioners' Act so as to suppress the law-touts. Resolution XIV reiterated the demand of the Congress for a proper land tenure system in the country.

Resolution XV repeated its protest against the grant of Exchange Compensation Allowance to the undomiciled European and Eurasian employees of the Government. Resolution XVII said about removal of the grievances of railway passengers. Resolution XVIII repeated the demand of the Congress for proper implementation of the forest laws. Resolution XIX thanked the Secretary of State for India for his assurance to reduce the duty on salt. Resolution XX reiterated the demand of the Congress for provision of higher education in India. Resolution XXI said about import duty on the goods of the Lancashire manufacturers for augmenting Government revenues. Resolution XXII said about the reaffirmation of previous resolutions as those relating to the raising of taxable limit on income from 500, to 1,000 rupees, trial of the accused persons in warrant cases by a sessions court, removal of the evil of starvation, suitable modification in the Arms Act, establishment of Military Colleges in India, organisation of militia services for the war-like people of the country, and just regulation of the water cess. Resolution XXIII said about assigning a sum of Rs. 60,000 to the British Committee for meeting certain expenses. Resolution XXIV thanked Sir William Wedderburn and the members of the

British Committee for their services. Resolution XXV said about the reappointment of Hume as the General Secretary and the appointment of D.E. Wacha as the Joint General Secretary of the Congress for the ensuing year. Finally, Resolution XXVI fixed the next session at Calcutta around Christmas next year. The official report of the Congress for this session happily noted that this session "held amidst so much enthusiasm is universally acknowledged to have been a most brilliant success."

### *The Twelfth Session (1896)*

This session opened at Calcutta on 28 December and sat for four days. It was attended by 784 delegates—605 from Bengal, 60 from the NWP and Oudh, 52 from Bombay, 31 from the C.P., Berar and Secunderabad, 28 from Madras, 7 from the Punjab, and 1 from London. Sir Romesh Chandra Mitra was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. But on account of his serious illness, his address written for this occasion was read out by Dr. Rash Behari Ghose. After this Pandit Bishamber Nath proposed and P. Anand Charlu seconded the name of Muhammed Rahimatullah for the presidentship. He then chaired the session.

### **BRITISH JUSTICE VIVIFIED BY BRITISH MAGNANIMITY\***

The spectacle now repeated for the twelfth time, which greets my eyes today, is one that is calculated to gladden our hearts and to confirm our long-cherished hopes. Our progress through the path chalked out by ourselves has been hitherto beset with difficulties and has been full of struggles, and I believe it will continue to be so for sometime to come. But do not be disheartened or discouraged on that account.

\*Welcome address written by Sir Romesh Chandra Mitra, Chairman, Reception Committee, for the Calcutta Congress held in December, 1896 and read out by Dr. Rash Behari Ghose.

In spite of all that has been said to the contrary, there is, to my mind something ineffably touching in this earnestness of our endeavour amid ridicule, misunderstanding and neglect, to press forward towards the goal of our aspirations ; in this expectant patience which anxiously watches events as they move slowly ; and in this unshaken confidence in the righteousness of our cause, in this abiding plenitude of faith, which believes that, appearances notwithstanding, the ultimate triumph of that cause will be the work of British magnanimity. With such earnestness, such patience, such confidence, such faith, you have come from your distant homes to strive unitedly towards the fulfilment of a sacred common purpose, dear to your hearts as pleasure and imperative to your conscience as duty. I cannot but feel grateful to my colleagues on the Reception Committee for the great honour they have done me in allowing me to represent them on such an occasion. Gentlemen, I give you, on their behalf, a most cordial welcome to the metropolis of India. It is impossible for those of us who had the honour and the pleasure of attending the Congress held in the sister Provinces to forget the anxious care, watchful forethought and mindfulness of every detail of convenience, the enthusiasm, the cordiality which marked the hospitality which it was their good fortune to share and which makes us keenly feel the deficiencies of our own arrangements. While therefore imploring the delegates from those provinces to be kind enough to overlook our shortcomings, I take liberty to assure them, that if the desire to please and the genuine happiness felt at the meeting, count for anything in a host, we are not by any means wanting in these important respects. We see around us faces now grown dear to us with familiarity of long acquaintance and intimate friendship men of different creeds and races, inhabiting places remote from each other, of diverse manners, customs and traditions, and speaking many tongues, who have assembled together in furtherance of the same great purpose, and animated by a common enthusiasm. Even if we eliminate the greatness and the vital importance of that purpose, the very fact of such an assemblage, giving as it does a rare and eagerly looked for opportunity of greeting



old friends scattered over this vast empire, is a sufficient stimulus to the ambition of the most niggardly host to rise equal to the occasion. The ambition is there, and I beg that any defect in its fulfilment may be generously ascribed to anything else but the heart.

On the Committee of which I have the honour to be the Chairman, inhabitants of all parts of the presidency and members of all sections of the community are represented. This is a new departure in the organisation of the Reception Committee, because we wish it to be understood that it is now one town or one section of the community, but that the whole of Bengal is taking part in this great act of national hospitality.

But it is not a mere *Mela* that we have assembled here to hold. If the Congress had borne no other fruit than the establishment of cordial relationship and mutual good understanding among the various Indian races and communities with apparently conflicting interests, it would certainly be a matter on which we might well congratulate ourselves. A united India if not an accomplished fact is a consummation devoutly to be wished for ; today's assemblage and its predecessors for over a decade, inspire us with the confident hope that we have passed through the stage of mere speculation and tentative experiment, and are making steady progress towards tangible accomplishment. We want to be united, and united for a purpose. Without discussing the point which does not properly arise now, whether such union is feasible on the basis of language or religion, I have no hesitation in saying that those who deny for India the possibility of such a union, forget that the essential 'cement, which unites such variously circumstanced peoples as the Indian races, is, above all things, a common political need, a unanimity in political aspirations, born on the fact that they owe willing allegiance and loving homage to the same beloved Sovereign. That we have felt the need, that we can be unanimous on matters in connection with it, is, to begin with entirely due to the enlightened and

essentially just Government under which we live, and the commencement being made under such auspices the desired end is sure to follow.

The spirit that pervades us is one that has been reawakened within us by the methods of administration which in other branches of our activity have borne such good and I hope lasting fruits. It is the spirit of intellectual doubt followed by patient inquiry, the spirit of reluctance to accept conclusions until they are tested and approved by reason, of an overmastering desire to do after a prolonged period of inane lethargy. English literature, English science, English history, which have been made accessible to us in the train of English administration, and in which our rulers take such a just and laudable pride would have to be reckoned as worth nothing, if they failed to achieve the results which have followed their pursuit in India.

The difficulties of Government are, in all circumstances, great, and nobody appreciates them better or more thoroughly than the race which, for centuries has been facing them, grappling with them, has made sustained efforts to overcome them, and in whose hands it has pleased Providence to place the destinies of India. But over and above this the fact that our Government is a Government by foreigners, alien in manners and customs, sentiment and feelings to the subject race, superadds other difficulties of no small magnitude. And our object is that we may have an organisation by which we may submit the unanimous views of that nation regarding public measures that come up for the consideration of the Government and by which we may indicate to our rulers in what respects the present machinery of administration may be improved, so as to promote national welfare to its fullest extent. We offer help, but no menace to the Government. The purpose of our uniting is not, as it has sometimes been misrepresented to be, to force its hands, but to induce conviction by reason and argument based upon direct representation of facts touching the condition of the people, and the effects of contrivances resorted to in the machinery of Government for ameliorating it.

Gentlemen, we wish to approach the Throne, stand face to face with it, and observe its justice and beneficence instead of merely feeling the weight of its omnipotence.

Such, Gentlemen, to my mind, is the purpose, of this gathering, the aim, and object of the Congress, a very important object, no doubt ; but simple, humble and innocent in all conscience. To those of you who have piloted the organisation from its inception, to those who have taken part in any of its deliberations, to unbiassed outsiders who have been at any the least pains to understand and follow the process of its functional and structural growth, this avowal is an unnecessary repetition of an already thrice-told tale ; but it is a repetition, which I venture to think, is not altogether without its uses. We of course, know what we are about, we make no secret of it ; we invite people to come and inspect our work. But in spite of all our precautions for ensuring publicity there will still be some individuals who will give us credit beyond our intentions. If these were persons with whom we never had any concern we might very well leave them alone. But the necessity of this oft-repeated avowal lies in the unfortunate fact that such individuals happen to constitute at least a portion of the very body with which we are most vitally concerned. It has been to me a regret and a puzzle why we have hitherto been unsuccessful in enlisting on the side of the Congress the appreciative sympathy, if not the active support of the entire ruling body. We approach the rulers with help in their difficulties, some of them cast furtive glances, and fight shy of us, imagining that we carry with us robbery or murder.

We tell them we mean no harm, and get in return flung in our faces the unkind riddle that we do not think our thoughts. Beg pardon, but we, and not you, can think our thoughts say we, and what can we do under the circumstances but to repeat our assurances in every form and trick of language, so as to convey to them our real meaning, hoping by repetition of words as of water drops to wear away their stony-hearted suspicion. Perhaps, they are not altogether to blame ; perhaps, in spite of all our efforts, we have not been sufficiently explicit,

perhaps we have not as yet caught the particular phrase which is intelligible to their ears, but I venture to think that it will be conceded that we have spared no efforts to make our aim and intention as clear as possible.

Yes, gentlemen we expect that openness should be met with openness.

We have told our rulers what we are, and what we mean to do ; and if there is any mis-apprehension touching our aims, or any patent defect in our method of work, we shall be only too glad, if our rulers will let us know how to remove the one, and rectify the other. We court criticism, or even censure, if ordered or administered in a really genuine spirit of sympathetic guidance. But beyond the application to us of some enigmatically condemning epithets, we have been favoured with nothing except cold and perhaps sullen silence.

Confident of the perfect transparency of our object we do not fear any light, mild or fierce, that may beat upon us ; but it is impossible to enter on the defence before charges are formulated. We may, however, gather into some sort of shape, some random adverse utterances and it may perhaps be worth while to attempt to reply to them, if only to show that we always are willing and prepared to give, in a spirit of sincerity, our best consideration to any suggestion or criticism that may be offered to us. It has been said that the Congress represents only the educated classes, a microscopic minority, and not the masses, or even all the sections of the community. It strikes me that the assertion, at least the most important part of it, is based upon a gratuitous and unwarrantable assumption of facts. If you unravel and analyse this somewhat complex proposition, you will find underlying it several postulates of very doubtful correctness. It presupposes a necessary antagonism, in matters with which the Congress is concerned between the educated and the non-educated, and that therefore, the former cannot represent the latter. It presupposes that the educated have an apathy for the uneducated, and that there-

fore the former do not represent the latter. It presupposes that a foreign administrator in the service of the Government knows more about the wants of the masses than their educated countrymen. These are premises which need only be stated in order to show that they carry with them their own refutation.

If it is true that those who think must govern those that toil, it is still more true, that those that think must represent those that toil. All ages and all countries, civilisation as well as barbarism, *a priori* reasoning in common with the facts of the history, testify to the axiomatic character of this simple and elementary but essential principle. It is to be believed that this natural order of things does not hold good in this unfortunate country ? Difference there certainly is between the educated and the uneducated. But difference is not antagonism. As a matter of fact, have our rulers ascertained that the views embodied in the Congress resolutions adopted during the last eleven years are not the views or are opposed to the views of the masses ? Are our rulers, as a matter of fact, aware that a very preponderating number of us who take part in the deliberations of the Congress were not exactly born in the purple and have necessarily to live among the masses, work with the masses, and share their joys and sorrows ? Is the mere fact of education to be made responsible for the very strange revulsion of feeling which creates in us the alleged antipathy and apathy to our own people ? If that is the allegation, the burden of proof is certainly on those who make it. The claims of education ordinarily, so strong, not only for representing itself, but those who have not received its blessings, are much more so where it is a case of not mere articulate-expressing of vaguely albeit keenly felt wants, but of additional complications and difficulties arising out of methods of government with which the masses are not familiar. And who can interpret to them this unfamiliar method but their countrymen who have acquired a familiarity with it by their western education and culture ?

It is impossible for the most sympathetic foreign officials to afford this help. It is extremely impossible that they would

make any serious attempt to touch the inner life of the masses. I do not deny that if they felt the vital necessity of doing so, they might succeed, at least partially. But they have not the incentive. The people have to approach them, and not the people. And the policy has been more than once declared and acted on that the principles of Government must be essentially European. Therefore the officials feel no necessity for directing their serious attention in this direction. And the very important thing which they need not do, which they will not do, the Congress volunteers to do, and begs their acceptance of the volunteering. The Congress is ambitious of effecting the connection necessary for the completion of the circuit, through which the prayers of a united nation may ascend from the ruled to the rulers. Search your hearts, gentlemen, and answer me these questions. Have you met here to aggrandise yourselves at the expense of the masses? Are your hearts callous to the miseries of your dumb fellow-subjects? Are your lawyers and newspaper-men, anxious only for the length of your speeches, and the breadth of your paragraphs? If that is so, break up the Congress, consider my welcome retracted and return to your homes. Pardon me, gentlemen; I know very well what your reply will be.

Does the Congress represent all sections of the community? It is true that many of our Mohammedan fellow subjects have not joined it yet. But I believe that their reluctance may be traced to much the same source as that which has given rise to misunderstanding and suspicion on the part of our rulers. Our avowed object is to promote the common weal of continental India. If we have been successful in making ourselves properly understood, it is difficult to conjecture the precise reason for their keeping aloof from the movement. It can hardly be any necessary antagonism between the interests of the Hindoos and the interests of the Mohammedans; for on the platform on which we meet such a conflict cannot exist. The points wherein we differ are not our topic, we do not discuss each other's social polity or domestic arrangements; nor is it our province to pronounce an opinion on the comparative merits of the

tenets of various Hindu and various Muslim sects. We meet on a platform on which Hindus and Muslims are brothers, as subjects of the same Sovereign, as governed by the same laws, as amenable to the control of the same officials. That Government is avowedly conducted not on Hindu or Mohammedan but on European principles. Hindus conform to that principle, and Mohammedans conform to it, and the closer the approximation the greater the political well-being. Logic and common-sense alike point to the conclusion that this antagonism between Hindus and Mohammedans is a myth.

It is however a pleasure to note that this needlessly unkind feeling of aloofness of our Mohammedan brethren is gradually and steadily disappearing. It is a source of great gratification to us all that we have this year as our President an eminent Mohammedan gentleman who is an honour not only to the community he represents but whose leadership to this national movement as President-elect of the Congress has been received with unmixed satisfaction and gratitude by all sections of our community in all parts of India.

Our vast vicissitudes and the experience we have gathered ought to make us certainly not sadder, but wiser men. Perhaps it has been, after all our own fault that misunderstanding of any sort or kind has been allowed to prevail, and it is just as well that to make assurance doubly sure we should at least, so long as there is the faintest chance of misconception, give a sufficiently binding guarantee touching not only our aims but also our mode of procedure so as to bring the certainty of conviction to the wavering, undoubting faith to the suspicious and satisfaction to the critical. We ought to hasten to define the constitution of the Congress in writing. Although it is a fact which nobody who has watched our work can deny, that from the very commencement who have adhered rigidly to the principle that the Congress should not adopt any resolution unless there was a practical unanimity, and that, therefore, a formal declaration is more or less superfluous, yet I think that superfluity is much safer than economy. It is probable that if

we had taken this precaution from before, there would not have been the necessity of this never-ending reiteration of our intentions, this proclamation of ourselves as a useful body. Let us put down in black and white, that we shall not adopt any proposal as one for which the Congress is responsible unless it is approved by practically the whole body of us. It will be not merely of the nature of protection of the interests of the minority, but of as complete a unanimity as possible. We should by this means be able to satisfy ourselves that really one sentiment pervades our counsels and underlies our union, to satisfy the Government that our prayers are unmistakably those of the nation, and to satisfy our Mohammedan brethren that it will be impossible for Hindu votes to swamp theirs.

I ought not to detain you further with this address which after all is only an introductory one. But I should be wanting in my duty to an intimate and a highly respected friend, and to a most prominent and useful member of the Congress, if I omitted to refer to a melancholy event which has cast a deep gloom over the people of this province, and if you will permit me to say so over the other provinces as well. A true patriot has recently passed away from us in the prime of his life and patriotic activity—I allude to the lamentable and untimely death of Mr. Monomohun Ghose. By his sincerity of manners, by his sweetness of temper, by his readiness to help the distressed, by his eminently practical turn of mind, by his deep legal learning, by his whole-hearted devotion to his country's cause, he had endeared himself, to high and low, to laymen and to the profession alike. The educated have no sympathy with the masses, our rulers imagine, let them search the records of criminal trails and they will see how Mr. Ghose, a fine product of western civilisation and education, felt in the depths of his heart and worked with a single-minded zeal for a poor wretch belonging to the lowest stratum of Indian society, worked not only as an advocate, but as a feeling protector. A sterling soul and a genuine patriot, his willing and able services were, amid the overwhelming pressure of professional engagements always at the disposal of his country's cause.



Of the Congress he was a powerful pillar. No long shall you have in your deliberations the benefit of his lucid eloquence, his masterly array of facts, his sober enthusiasm, his genial and dignified presence, his sincere support and his whole-souled sympathy. The separation of the Judicial from the Executive functions was latterly the chief object of his strenuous endeavour ; and when he took a thing up, he took it up with all the determination of his earnest nature. I mourn the loss of a dear friend ; and all of us mourn the loss of a fervent and unflinching patriot taken away when the need of him was the sorest.

It cannot for a moment be doubted that we meet this year under most adverse circumstances. Our countrymen in all parts of India are suffering from famine ; and we in Calcutta where the Congress meets were threatened with what is called the plague. It was seriously proposed to us that the sittings of the Congress should be suspended for this year. We could not see our way to accept this proposal. We had invited our countrymen from all parts of India to come and meet us in Calcutta. We could not very well tell them that the invitation was cancelled and that our houses were closed. But apart from this sentimental consideration there were others of graver importance which influenced us in our decision. The famine unfortunately is an ever-recurring event in India. It occurs with almost the periodicity of climatic changes to which we are accustomed. Now that we are confronted with this terrible calamity, and the attention of the rulers and the ruled alike is drawn to it, we feel that the Congress should meet now, if ever, if only to declare its views, to enlighten, and if need be, to protest. I am sure the famine will be a question which will engage your earnest attention, and your conclusions will, I am convinced, be such as will not fail to enlighten the Government and the British public. I will venture to add in this connection that it will not be enough for us to indicate the measures of relief which the Government may adopt. We must go deeper into the causes which from time to time produce such widespread scarcity throughout India. What

those causes are it is not for me to say, but there is a general and widespread impression that the country is being gradually impoverished by excessive taxation and by over-assessment in the districts that are not permanently settled.

Our tale of sorrow is ended. In the economy of nature, joy and pain are mysteriously intermingled. The year that is about to expire, came upon us, trailing clouds of gathering gloom as well as glory. Our glorious Empress has during the year completed the record of the longest reign of any British Sovereign and what a proud record of peace, progress and enlightenment it is ? To every Indian Her name is a household word. Never I believe within historic times, has any Sovereign of Hindoostan evoked such deep enthusiastic loyalty, such loving attachment of her person, such gratefulness for the anxious and benign solicitude for the welfare of the teeming millions as our beloved Queen-Empress.

Brother-delegates, once more I bid you a hearty welcome to our city.

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In this session 24 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I congratulated Her Gracious Majesty, the Queen Empress on having attained the 60th year of her reign. Resolution II thanked Sir William Wedderburn and other members of the British Committee for their services to India. Resolution III repeated the demand of the Congress for separation of executive and judiciary. Resolution IV said about the provincial contracts. Resolution V desired Indianisation of the public services and holding of ICS examinations simultaneously in England and India. Resolution VI protested against the British policy of excluding the Indians from higher Educational Services. Resolution VII repeated the demand of the Congress for trial by jury. Resolution VIII desired reduction of salt tax. Resolution IX repeated demand of the Congress for abolition of restrictions on Indian settlers in South Africa. Resolution X said about civil and medical services in India.

Resolution XI was like an omnibus document that reaffirmed the demands of the Congress for a just excise policy, trial of persons accused in the warrant cases by a sessions court, suitable modification of the Arms Act, establishment of Military Colleges in India, discontinuance of the grant of Exchange Compensation Allowance to the non-domiciled European and Eurasian employees of Government, establishment of a Legislative Council and a High Court in the province of the Punjab, and removal of restrictions on the press in Native States. Resolution XII desired eradication of the curse of famine. Resolution XIII repeated the demand of the Congress for the removal of poverty. Resolution XIV desired changes in the Universities Act for the introduction of teaching functions for a wider scope of learning. Resolution XVI desired that in the Executive Councils of the Governors of Bombay and Madras there should be at least three members and one of them be an Indian. Resolution XVII protested against the Government Policy relating to the settlement of land revenue for short periods. Resolution XVIII urged that in future no Indian prince be deposed without holding a proper enquiry into the charge of maladministration levelled against him. Resolution XIX attacked the retrograde policy of the Government of India in nominating a gentleman for the Central Provinces to the Imperial Legislative Council without consulting the local bodies. Resolution XX thanked D.E. Wacha and his team for presenting Indian case before the Royal Commission on Expenditure. Resolution XXI reposed trust of the Congress in Naoroji and hoped that he would be re-elected for the House of Commons from Central Finsbury or from any other constituency. Resolution XXII said that a sum of Rs. 60,000 be assigned to the British Committee for meeting its expenses. Resolution XXIII said about the re-appointment of Hume as the General Secretary and of Wacha as the Joint General Secretary of the Congress for the ensuing year. Finally, Resolution XXIV fixed the next session at Amraoti on a date around Christmas next year. By all means it was a grand success and the authors of the official report of this session noted that the Congress "has outlived much

calumny. It has done so not by waging against it a war of words, but by falsifying it by deeds”.

*The Thirteenth Session (1897)*

This session opened at Amraoti on 27 December and sat for three days. Unfortunately this “was the saddest year that India had known for long : famines had ravaged the land ; plague had appeared in a form unknown for centuries ; a ruinous frontier war had hampered finances ; floods, fires and earthquakes had added their terrors”. (Annie Besant) It was attended by 692 delegates—593 from the C.P. Berar and Secunderabad, 38 from Madras, 33 from Bengal, 17 from Bombay, 10 from the NWP and Oudh, and 1 from the Punjab. This was the first time when the Government officials put every possible difficulty in the way of holding the Congress partly because of the wild outburst of suspicion and hatred which followed the murder of the Plague Commissioner of Poona (Rand) and of Lieutenant Ayerst and partly because of the quarantine established by the fear of plague. In spite of this the number of delegates who attended this session was impressive. G.S. Khaparde delivered the welcome address. After that Surendranath Banerjea proposed and M.V. Joshi seconded the name of C. Sankaran Nair for the presidency. He was elected unanimously.

**TEST OF A GOOD AND A RIGHTEOUS  
CAUSE\***

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my duty to welcome you to Amraoti. The Reception Committee has done me the high honour to entrust me with that agreeable duty by electing me their Chairman, and if all duties in this World were half as pleasant as this one, life would be very enjoyable indeed ! Ladies and gentlemen, I welcome you to this people’s hall with all my heart, on behalf

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\*Address delivered by G.S. Khaparde, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Amraoti session held in December, 1897.

of myself personally, on behalf of the Reception Committee particularly, and on behalf of the well-wishers of our Congress cause residing in this province generally. But I am afraid I must ask you to take our will for our deed, for I am deeply conscious that our arrangements for your convenience and comfort are not so complete and satisfactory as I should wish them to be. I, however, take courage from the fact that though you are our honoured guests, you come here in the character of fellow workers in the great national cause, and as such our difficulties are your difficulties and our joys are your joys and our success is your success. In this spirit then let us stand shoulder to shoulder and consider how we stand today. The year which is about to close has been about the most unfortunate we have experienced for many years past. Indeed without indulging in any exaggeration I may say, it has been the worst period within the last forty years. It would appear as if the adverse fates had sat in consultation as to how they could possibly give us the utmost trouble on purpose, I suppose, to test the strength and solidarity of the movement inaugurated just twelve years ago. First came the famine in all its devastating fury, if I may use such an expression. It spread its flames and smoke all over the country and cast a shade deep, dark and terrible in a manner in which it had never done before. Lank and gaunt figures, anxious and haggard faces, mere skeletons which were the varietal of apologies for human beings, were to be seen everywhere. Unsupportable grief and misery became the order of the day. But with all this it failed to accomplish its object, namely, of injuring the noble Congress cause. For, to combat it, our men zealously seconded the efforts of the devoted officers of the benign British Government, and it appeared that the rulers and the ruled had combined to fight a common enemy. The prospect appeared to be that when the famine was over, every one would realise the fact that though in ordinary times we find fault and offer criticisms, in times of danger we are at one with Government. So our real and true loyalty would be proved to demonstration. This did not suit the adverse fates. So they sent the plague in a form in which it was absolutely

unknown for centuries in this fair land. The medical profession knew little about it and knows little about it to this day, but it was felt, and rightly felt, that something must be done. Sanitary measures, segregation, which is exceedingly disagreeable at all times, became more disagreeable when the minds of people were already rendered despondent by the terrors of famine. But the cup of bitterness was not full to the brim, so the evil powers kindled a war on the Frontiers, as has not been heard of all throughout the whole of the period of British administration. Nearly sixty thousand well-equipped, splendidly disciplined and ably officered soldiers had to operate against a few wild uncivilised tribes in their native mountains and fastnesses. This ruinous war had no advantages to offer but was potent in hampering the resources of Government both in men and money, and thereby rendering the combat with plague and famine somewhat unequal. But we might have yet pulled through it, as we eventually did by subordinating all our differences of opinions to present dangers; but the evil elements did not want it. So they sent out fires and floods to oppress and harass different parts of the country, earthquakes to dishearten and strike terror, and in the midst of the confusion caused by all these sent out the Demon of Distrust to stalk the country by getting two most unfortunate and deplorable murders committed at Poona and enveloping them in a deep mystery. The whole resembled a scene, often witnessed in the beginning of a winter storm, the sky overcast with dark and threatening clouds chasing each other, winds blowing hard in contrary directions, thunder and lightning everywhere, and the thunderbolt about to fall, who can say, on whom and where?

On occasions of this kind it is well known to use a familiar Indian proverb, "a child does not recognize its mother and the mother does not recognise her child. Friends are mistaken for foes and well-reasoned conclusions are abandoned for hurried consultations and precipitate acts done on the spur of the moment". Thus arose the scare of a wide-spread conspiracy, and the so-called State prosecutions followed as an

unfortunate sequence, accompanied by unexpected deportations, for reasons not disclosed even up to this day. These deportations are of persons descended from one who deserved well of, and received the reward from, the British Government itself. This will show you how friends are being mistaken for foes. You know that the educated classes are the offsprings of the environments created by the British Government itself. Their aspirations are those that are inspired by western culture and yet they are not so recognised by those who put the seed of education into them and fostered it with the loving care of a parent. This will illustrate what I mean when I say that a mother does not recognise her child. We are not yet quite out of the clutches of this demon of distrust and though our instincts lead us to run to our mother she will have none of us, believing probably that we shall communicate to her the plague bacillus which she suspects has impregnated our system. There is the proposal to amend the Criminal Law and its procedure now looming before the eyes—looming at no great distance. You will have soon to consider and make up your minds about these proposed changes in the law of the land, and I will not anticipate your deliberations by saying anything about them. I have, ladies and gentlemen, endeavoured to give you, in brief, most of the adverse circumstances that have surrounded us during the unhappy year which is about to expire. If these had their own way and we had nothing to oppose them with, we should not be here today. By way, therefore, of enlivening this otherwise doleful statement, I shall, with your permission, briefly touch upon the internal forces which have been at work with us to bring us here together. You all probably know that Amraoti is a town known to fame in our religious episodes. It was here that Rukmini, who by-the-bye was the incarnation of the goddess of wealth, sent up an earnest prayer for being wedded to Lord Krishna in the temple of Amba, which, I hope, you will not omit to visit. It was here that her prayer was granted; it was here that Lord Krishna came with a single chariot, opposed and successfully met the serried battallions of his opponents and carried away the beautiful and beloved

Rukmini, who not only represents in the Brahmin religion all that is good and great, but also is the incarnation of the goddess of all worldly prosperity, of all human love, of all feminine graces, of all masculine virtues, of all that is permanent and enduring. Our Congress, having come to this temple of Amba and offered a humble but earnest prayer for success, could not, I believe, be under Providence turned away disappointed. We took courage from the fact that in our heart of hearts there was nothing but loyalty and a desire to offer our help to so improve the present administration, as to render it permanent, perpetual and ever-lasting, and to render the people under its sway, prosperous, happy and contented. This may not be known to some of our erring human rulers, but is known to the Great Ruler of all nations, the Great Giver of all good, the Omniscient source of all power. We felt confident that this thirteen years old child, coming to the doors of mother Amba, with folded hands, prayerful heart, in a righteous cause, could not but be lovingly taken up by the hand by the mother who blessed and granted success to the yearnings of both the loving Rukmini and the victorious Lord Krishna.

To shed light, as it were, on our difficult path there came during the year of Jubilee of the mother of all the nations of India, the giver of the Magna Charta of 1858, on which we have always and shall always take our stand. The celebrations held on that auspicious occasion were the only rays of light that penetrated the otherwise impenetrable gloom of the year, and we recognised in them the hand of mother Amba, who, as I said and we believe, is the giver of all good. Then there were letters from our grand old man, whom you easily recognise without my mentioning even his name. He worthily bears the name of his celebrated father, and I have no doubt history will delight in perpetuating the name and spreading the films of his noble ideas conceived in all sympathy for the good of our people. His great friend and adviser, one of the illustrious band which was present and assisted in the ushering of this now thirteen years old child into the world, and who has



guided your deliberations on two most important occasions first favoured us with his advice and has come to help us with his presence. Ladies and gentlemen, local difficulties there were, but what good cause is there, which is not beset with difficulties local, provincial and, if I may say so, even imperial. I ask what cause is there which is pronounced to be good without surmounting these difficulties. In fact, the test of a good and righteous cause is its capability, its vitality, its strength to cope with all kinds of adverse circumstances and to emerge out of all these triumphant and full in the glory of achieved success. This cause is yours and without the gift of prophecy I venture to predict that you are bound to succeed in the long run. The fact of your presence here under the circumstances and in the numbers in which you have come is itself a guarantee of success. You have left your homes and the dear ones in them in these days of pestilence, famine, earthquakes, fires, floods, and have travelled long distance to be present here to assist in the grand cause of bringing about a better understanding between the rulers and the ruled, a unification of their aspirations, a well-understood community of their real interests. If ever a session of our Congress was necessary it is most essentially necessary now. This movement is designed to interpret the thoughts of the rulers to the ruled and to represent the grievances of the people to the powers that be. This task, always arduous, is doubly arduous this year, as, one of our celebrated, taught to me in my early days, which I may roughly translate thus : 'One who labours for the benefit of the king comes to be disliked by the people, and one who labours for the welfare of the people comes to be discarded by the king ; when such conflict exists rare is the man who can do good both to the king and to the people.' The English constitution has made the task of such a man easy ; supreme in her prerogative Her Majesty reigns, joyful in the possession of their rights the people of England elect their representatives, the aristocracy of the land meets both, and all these three combined work for the weal of their Empire. This of course is the highest ideal. We are making humble efforts to be included as living beings in their constitution, to

have the proud glory of being able to say *Civis Britannicus Sum* and we should not be discouraged if we are opposed, traduced, and even abused. This opposition and misrepresentation should always teach us to examine our programme more and more carefully, to eliminate from it errors that we may have been led into, and render it as acceptable as we possibly can, to those who do not see eye to eye with us in this matter. We have to walk in a spirit of conciliation, and harshness even in thought or word must be strictly avoided; nay, we must eschew even the semblance of these and always act on the old good proverb 'soft words and hard arguments.' With a view to induce sobriety and to prevent our fellow subjects, who dissent from us, from introducing their feelings and prejudices into the discussions, we must take care that we do not introduce our own feelings and prejudices, so as to provoke a retaliation.

I feel, ladies and gentlemen, your task is difficult, but I know that you have hitherto been always moderate and reasonable, and I have no reason to believe that you will not be the same even in this year of trouble and tribulation.

It remains that you should now proceed to elect your President, and before I resume my seat, I would once more welcome you heartily to our province, which is very small and occupies the unique position of being neither British India nor a Native State.

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In this session 21 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I criticised the frontier policy of the Government for being injurious to the best interests of the British Empire. Resolution II said that the British Government should pay its contribution to the expenses incurred by war in the north-western frontier as a result of its forward policy. Resolution II-A empowered the President to submit a position to the British Parliament in this regard. Resolution III said about the reduction of the Government expenditure. Resolution IV was in the nature of an omnibus document that reaffirmed the demands of the

Congress as in the past. Resolution V repeated the demand of the Congress for the Indianisation of public services and holding of ICS examination simultaneously in England and India. Resolution VI repeated the demand of the Congress for freedom of press in the Native States. Resolution VII repeated the demand of the Congress for just and lasting land revenue settlement. Resolution VIII repeated the demand of the Congress for separation of executive and judiciary. Resolution IX expressed satisfaction at the appointment of a Famine Commission and urged that the best remedy for the eradication of this curse lay in the removal of the poverty of the country. Resolution X said about famine relief aid. Resolution XI repeated the demand of the Congress that there should a council of three members under the Governors of Bombay and Madras and one of them should be an Indian.

Resolution XII criticised the extraordinary powers of the Government. It said :

“Resolved that this Congress respectfully deprecates the exercise by the Government of the extraordinary powers vested in them by Bengal Regulation III of 1818, Madras Regulation II of 1819, and Bombay Regulation XXV of 1827 at a time of peace and quiet, and submits that such powers should be exercised only under such limitations as will ensure their being put in force with the utmost circumspection and care and under a sense of the highest responsibility by the Government.

(a) This Congress therefore urges that none of these Regulations should be put into force except after notification by the Local Government concerned that the circumstances contemplated by the preamble of the Regulations exist in its Province or in some definite area within the Province, and that it intends, if necessary, to exercise the powers vested in it ; and further that in no case should such powers extend to keeping a person arrested under them in custody for a period of longer than three months without his being brought to trial before a Court of Justice.

(b) That this Congress, while feeling that the Government of Bombay must have acted under a sense of responsibility in arresting the Sardars Natu under Bombay Regulation XXV of 1827, is yet of opinion, that five months having now elapsed from such arrest, it is the duty of the Government, in the interests of justice, and also to allay the disquiet and uneasiness which has been created in the minds of the people at large by the arrest, to bring them—the Sardars Natu—to trial without delay, or, if the Government have no sufficient evidence against them to place before a Court of justice, to release them.”

Resolution XIII criticised the law of sedition. It said :

“Resolved that this Congress views with alarm and anxiety the changes proposed in the existing law of sedition as defined in Section 124 A, and of circulating false reports as defined in Section 505 of the Indian Penal Code, and is of opinion that Section 124 A of the Indian Penal Code requires amendment, not in the direction of greater stringency but in that of greater freedom, and if the law of sedition in India is to be made the same as it is in England, the administration of it ought to be safeguarded substantially in the same way as it is there, *viz*, that the trial of accused persons must always be by jury, at least one half of whom should be persons of the same nationality as the accused, and that their verdict should be unanimous. And this Congress strongly protests against cases of sedition being made triable by Magistrates and not by Courts of Sessions and High Courts exclusively as heretofore, and against the proposal to invest District Magistrates with the power of calling upon persons, who, in their opinion, disseminate disaffection to find sureties of good behaviour for twelve months. This Congress is further of opinion that the changes in the law now proposed, will be altogether at variance with the pledges given by Sir James Fitz-James Stephen when passing Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code through the Council, and will deal an irreparable blow to liberty of speech and freedom of the Press, thus retarding the progress of the country and creating terror, instead of confidence in the minds of the people.

That a copy of this Resolution be submitted to the Legislative Council by the President."

Resolution XIV protested against any change in the Criminal Procedure Code that would invest the Magistrates with arbitrary powers. Resolution XV repeated the demand of the Congress for the creation of a Legislative Council in the Punjab and conferment of rights of interpellation on the members of the Legislative Councils. Resolution XVI demanded improvement of Barar. Resolution XVII desired extension of the scope of the Famine Commission so that it could look into the causes and suggest remedies for the removal of this great curse. Resolution XVIII reiterated its faith in Naoroji and hoped for his re-election from Central Finsbury or from any other constituency for the House of Commons. Resolution XIX thanked Sir William Wedderburn and the British Committee for their services and assigned a sum of Rs. 60,000 for their expenses. Resolution XX said about the reappointment of Hume as General Secretary and of Wacha as Joint General Secretary of the Congress for the ensuing year. Finally, Resolution XXI fixed the next session at Madras around Christmas next year.

#### *The Fourteenth Session (1898)*

This session opened in the city of Madras on 29 December and sat for three days. It was attended by 614 delegates—519 from Madras, 38 from Bengal and Assam, 27 from Bombay, 18 from the Central Provinces, Berar and Hyderabad, 11 from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, and 1 from the Punjab. The fall in the number of delegates occurred due to conditions of famine and plague in the country as well as to the growing repressive policy of the British Government. As Mrs. Annie Besant has observed: "The clouds were gathering on the political horizon, coercion was showing its hideous face, ensuring the growth of secret conspiracy, and alienation from the Government, which confessed its weakness by employing it, all that was best and noblest in the land. The famine and the plague had exercised a depressing influence in

the country, and the dislike shown to the vivifying influence of English education had increased".<sup>1</sup> N. Subba Row Pantulu delivered the welcome address. After that P. Anand Charlu proposed and R.N. Mudholkar seconded the name of Anand Mohan Bose. He was elected and he chaired this session.

### **CONGRESS AS INTERPRETER OF INDIAN MIND\***

Fellow Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It has devolved on me on this occasion to welcome you on behalf of the Reception Committee to the capital of Southern India, and I need not say that I consider it a privilege to have to perform this pleasing function. I most cordially offer you our welcome and invite you to enter upon your deliberations in a spirit worthy of the traditions of the Indian National Congress. We regret that our arrangements are not so good as we wished they should be. The plague has been knocking at our doors during the last three months, and till recently there were serious apprehensions that, after all, it might not be safe to hold in this city the present session of the Congress. However, by the beginning of the month it became evident that, fortunately for us, the plague would not seriously interfere with the proper conduct of our deliberations; and accordingly our preparations were pushed on for holding the Fourteenth Session of the Indian National Congress in Madras. We have tried to do our very best, and we beg you to accept the arrangements made for your comfort and convenience, however inadequate they may be, in the spirit in which we offer you our welcome.

We of the extreme south of India are sincerely happy to meet you, our fellow countrymen from all parts of this ancient

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1. Annie Besant : *How India Wrought for Freedom*, p. 270. The authors of the official report of this session noted that "the general depression that had come over the Indian people in consequence of the reactionary spirit of the Government for some time past had not disappeared."

\*Address delivered by N. Subba Row Pantulu, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Madras session held in December, 1898.

and historic land. We are glad that this occasion has been afforded to us to meet again old familiar faces and contract new friendships. At our annual gatherings, during these several years, we have come to know one another well, and have learnt from personal contact and communication how the various parts of the country are progressing, and what the various movements are which in those several parts have been set on foot to better the condition of the people. Through these gatherings we here have come to feel that you are after all one with us, that you are not so distant from us as it may seem at first sight, that we are all naturally interested in one another, and that we are in a body pledged to support the righteous rule of our common sovereign.

We miss with deep sorrow on this occasion some of our prominent fellow-workers. Death has been busy in our rank. We mourn the loss of the great Sikh Nobleman of the Punjab, Sirdar Dayal Singh, whose active support given to the Congress won for him the esteem of his countrymen, and whose munificent bequests for advancing the cause of education and in aid of various institutions have made his name memorable throughout the Indian Empire. We mourn also the loss of the premier nobleman of Bengal, the Maharajah of Darbhanga, who nobly and unstintingly used his wealth, exerted his influence, and raised his voice always to promote public welfare. Never did two such men among the nobility in India combine in themselves in such a marked manner the qualities that go to make a true citizen of the British Indian Empire, and prove by their conduct that they clearly grasped the real conditions of Great Britain's sway over India. They were a tower of strength to us, and though they have left us, their spirit is still with us, exhorting us to go on with the work of national elevation, in which they were so deeply interested. It is impossible on this occasion not to think of that Grand Old Man of England who has passed away and who, so long as he lived, was an embodiment of the highest Christian morality and the best humanitarian statesmanship. His life encouraged our aspirations and strengthened our hopes, and

the Congress with peculiar attachment to his personality was sending its congratulations to him year after year on his birthday. This we cannot do now. Nevertheless, we have the consolation that we are also sharers in that precious heritage which his life and his work have left to the British Empire.

This is the third occasion on which Madras has had the proud distinction of welcoming the Congress. Providence first led the British nation to lay here on the Coromandel Coast the foundations of this vast and magnificent Indian Empire—an Empire which rouses and will continue to rouse the envy of other European States for the rare and splendid opportunity which it has afforded to Great Britain to justify her claim as the first world state, not merely on account of the strength of her Navy and Army, but on account of her righteousness in the Government of all her subjects. It has been said that the spectacle of the various states and kingdoms in India having been slowly welded into one whole, and brought under the control of one central authority, is unique in the history of the world. But still more unique is this gathering of assembled delegates under the name of the Indian National Congress, with its spontaneous and loving loyalty to the British Throne. It is indeed more unique to see delegates from Lahore and Benares, from Amraoti and Nagpur, from Bombay and Calcutta, from Tinnevely and Ganjam travel, in these times of plague, great distances at great personal sacrifice, with the object of deliberating upon the best methods of developing British rule in India to the glory of England and the prosperity of India.

It is just forty years ago, in the last expiring days of the East India Company—but yesterday as it were in the history of a nation—that some of the disorderly and uneducated sections of the races in India rose almost as one man against the British to drive them out of power. It was a sore hour of trial and danger, causing dismay to England's friends and rejoicing to England's enemies. This uprising, in the words



of the historian, "transcended experience, baffled skill, bewildered statesmanship; it was full of surprise to those who were least likely to be surprised; it misled the wisest and the best informed". To-day under the direct rule of Her Gracious Majesty, who loved to take unto herself the title of Empress of India, the elite of this vast continent from its remotest parts—leaders in their own places, prosperous in their professions, respected by their fellow-countrymen—meet in numbers year after year to strengthen the foundations of that same rule which, in 1857, ignorant and misguided people tried to overthrow. Does this spectacle also baffle skill, transcend experience, and bewilder statesmanship—the spectacle of this Congress of delegates pledged to perpetuate British rule and British methods of Government in this land? To those who have studied the history and the conditions of the country, the Indian National Congress cannot surely be an enigma.

The revolt of 1857 closed a chapter in the history of British India. There was no possibility in those days of the inauguration of an institution like the Indian National Congress. The revolt practically marks the final stage in the physical consolidation of the Indian Empire. It enforced the necessity for the actual adoption of helpful and progressive principles in the Government of this country. It gave a new impetus to the mental and moral advancement of the Indian people. The beneficent forces that have been actively at work during all these later years have at last culminated in the establishment of the Indian National Congress, which undoubtedly marks an epoch in the annals of India and renders it impossible, so long as the institution lasts, for anything like the events of 1857, to occur again. Those who have attentively watched the working of these forces have described this Institution in language which is highly flattering to the British nation. In the words of the gifted and impartial historian of India, Sir W.W. Hunter, it is "the child of British rule, the product of schools and universities". In the words of the veteran Indian statesman, the late Sir Madhava Row, it is "the soundest triumph of British administration and a crown of glory to the

great British nation". I go further and say that without the Indian National Congress as the natural and inevitable result of England's good work in India, the mission of England in the East may well be characterised as an unjustifiable failure. It has already saved the high and inspiring political mission of England in India from the possible reproach of sterility and ill success, and is indeed destined in the fulness of time to bring about in our midst the realisation of the highest ideals of British statesmanship and British political wisdom.

I say further that the Indian National Congress is absolutely needed under the present conditions of India. The British nation is making a unique experiment in the Government of this vast country of diverse creeds and races. To the British people at home India mainly continues to be, as in the days of Edmund Burke, "a seminary for the succession of officers" and "a kingdom of magistrates". No doubt, planters merchants and others have sought and found their places in this land in these latter days, but their lives are moulded and their conduct is regulated after the example set by the officials. Their home is not India. They fondly look back to England to return thither as speedily as they can, of course after hard and honest work done in this country. Under these circumstances, what Principal Fairburn said the other day is applicable to all of them. He said : "We should never know the Indian problems till we knew the Indian mind. Therefore to interpret India to England is a greater necessity than to interpret England to India." Who is better fitted to interpret India to England than we to whom England has been interpreted through her Literature, through her Colleges, and above all through her missionaries ? Which organisation does better reflect the Indian mind and offer to solve Indian problems than this Indian National Congress ? If the Indian National Congress is thus the best, and I may say the only, instrument in India, which is capable of accurately interpreting India to England, why is it not welcomed with open arms by the sons of England in this country as it surely deserves to be ?

At first treated with ridicule and abuse, it has now come to be looked upon by the Government of India as a Constitutional and legitimate movement representing in India "what in Europe would be called the more advanced liberal party". It is also said that the Government desires to maintain an attitude of neutrality towards it. As a general rule Anglo-Indians now regard the movement with suspicion and are apathetic towards it, being, however, prone to discredit the whole movement on account of seeming failures on the part of individual members taking part in its deliberations. This is not certainly the proper attitude to assume towards a movement which honestly, tries to point out dangers ahead, and suggests ways and means for carrying on the complex administration of the country with the consent of its various populations—towards a movement which according to so high an authority as Sir W.W. Hunter, represents "a political power in India which no Indian statesman or Member of Parliament could afford to disregard." "We have," he says, "created and fostered aspirations which animate the Congress and it would be both churlish and unwise to refuse now to those aspirations both our sympathy and our respectful consideration". It is the attitude of the Government that is chiefly responsible for the aloofness of the major portion of the non-official Anglo-Indian community. This attitude of the Government is also responsible for the indifference of Eurasian community, which now wishes largely to be guided by Anglo-Indian aspirations. The mistaken attitude of some of our Mohammedan fellow-countrymen is also due to the same cause. We may ultimately trace to the same source the unfair criticisms, that sometimes disfigure the columns of some of our Anglo-Indian journals. Is it right that the Government which is ready and willing to consult us individually in our Districts and Provinces, when it chooses to consult non-official opinion, should be so suspicious of us all when we meet together under the name of the Indian National Congress? And is it right that it should be so tardy and apparently so unwilling to bestow serious consideration on our proposals and suggestions? The reason for this is not far to seek. The official hierarchy does not fully grasp the changes

that are sweeping over the country and cannot sufficiently understand the requirements of new India—the India of Schools and Colleges, the India of Universities, the India of the National Congress. The Anglo-Indian mind fondly lingers over the memories of the splendid physical conquest it effected in obliterating the old political and geographical boundaries in India. It does not move sufficiently onward with the march of Indian intellect and Indian aspirations. Moreover, the demands of the Congress trench on official preserves and encroach on official privileges. This movement holds up a lofty ideal before the “experts” in charge of the administration of the country and calls upon them to act up to that ideal—to make British citizenship in India a reality in every respect. Like the sensitive plant, the official mind shrinks at the touch of our demands. The conditions of India are to them apparently as bewildering as the conditions that produce a sudden cyclone. They seem to have laid to heart this one lesson from the Revolt of 1857—“that the Government of 200 millions of human beings about whom the governing race knows little except that they differ *toto caelo* from themselves in temperament, belief, taste, and the way of looking at life—is likely to produce unexpected results and to be diversified with unexpected incidents.”

Hence it is that the Anglo-Indian mind sees conspiracy where there is none, seeks to revive obsolete regulations so as to take away personal liberty in times of peace. Hence it is that Government finds it necessary to hedge itself round with stringent laws regarding sedition. Hence it is that the Government has found it necessary to emphasise in its laws, regulations and resolutions, the distinction between the British-born and Indian subjects of Her Majesty, the Queen of England and the Empress of India. And Lord Elgin feels it necessary to tell the public that Britain has to hold India by the sword if need be. The Government of India finds curious reasons why long-term settlements should be discontinued and short-term settlements introduced in the assessment of land revenue, and why the full share of the Government demand should be

assessed and taken, and why low assessments should be permitted. A low assessment, it seems, will reduce an industrious body of tenants into a body of idle and useless people, and that a limitation on the power of ryots to transfer their interests in land is necessary for the agricultural prosperity of the country.

There is also some excuse for this state of the Anglo-Indian mind. It indicates the natural reaction against liberalism in Indian politics—a reaction which is inevitable. Such a reaction represents a stage in the progress of every movement, and we must be prepared for it. The mischievous consequences of such a reactionary policy are sure to become apparent in due course of time. It is refreshing, however, to observe in this connection that this kind of feeling is not shared in by several of our British fellow subjects here and elsewhere. We must thankfully acknowledge that they in growing numbers sympathise with our aspirations, while some of them actually take part and help us in our deliberations. We cannot be too thankful to the Chairman, Sir William Wedderburn, and to the members of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress for their indefatigable and self-sacrificing efforts in advocating the cause of India before England. And it is a matter of much satisfaction that Lord Sandhurst did recently, on the occasion of unveiling the statue of Mr. Chester Macnaughten, formerly principal of the Rajkumar College, at Rajkote, recognise that “the native character is extremely responsive and amenable to gentleness and persuasion, and that far more is to be gained by a demeanour of that description than by hectoring and bullying where gentleness should succeed.” It is matter of gratification that our new Viceroy heralds his advent to India by a remarkable statement that he has accepted the Viceroyalty because he loves India. About 18 years ago, another Viceroy came to this country and proved by his acts that righteousness alone exalteth a nation. Lord Ripon really loved India and her people. We pray to that benign Providence who watches over the destinies of nations to give Lord Curzon sufficient strength of mind and heart to demonstrate his love by such

acts and deeds as will draw together England and India more closely than ever in the bonds of amity and love. In the meantime, we have no reason or excuse to keep quite. We must all decline to accept for the administration of the country any ideal lower than that laid down by the Queen Empress, Her Parliament and Her Statesmen. What may be taken as the motto of the British administration in India is well expressed in the Proclamation issued in 1848 under the order of Lord Lawrence to the agriculturists of a district in the Punjab : "What is your injury is mine, what is gain to you, I consider mine." The duty of the Congress is to press home to the minds and hearts of administrators the full import of these wise words and make them see with our eyes what constitutes our injury and what constitutes our gain. The persistence of our demands and the publicity of our proceedings cannot but show that we are in earnest, and that our endeavours are in the cause of peace and progress.

It is said that the main object of the Congress is merely to get the door of official patronage more widely thrown open to Indians. This is no doubt one of the demands of the Congress, and we lay stress on it, as it is conducive to economy, progress and safety. Really, we have no quarrel with our official brethren and we are not blind to their many merits. There is no denying that in the circumstances in which they are placed and under the conditions imposed on them, they are as a body serving the State with devotion, honesty and thoroughness. But the function of the services is not to shape the policy of the state ; it is only to work it out when declared. Such a great political philosopher as John Stuart Mill has pointed out with characteristic insight that there is danger in allowing the services to usurp the power of laying down the policy, and that in the independence and periodical change of Viceroys and Governors lies the security against such usurpation taking place in India. Partly because of the growth in the quantity and complexity of the details of administrative work and partly because of the increasing frequency of mandates from home, this moral safeguard has become too weak to serve the purpose.

There must, therefore, be in the constitution of the Government of India, a more uniformly operative and more unfailing check than the individuality of the ruler to prevent the undesirable inroads of the services. It is not but proper that we should demand that the internal policy of British India should be made to accord well with the sentiments and aspirations of the people whom that policy most intimately affects, and that in the Government of India there should be room for Indian statesmanship to be associated with British statesmanship? It is to obtain the constitutional recognition of the people's voice as an effective part of the machinery of the State that we are striving. The statutory concession granted to us to a limited extent in response to our demands in the matter of the re-constitution of the Legislative Councils touches but the fringe of the great object we have in view. We must go on working till that object is accomplished and our imperial citizenship becomes a reality and a potent factor in our national life.

More than all this, the Congress is to us the only platform where persons of all creeds and races may meet together to discuss important political and politico-social questions that concern them all. It is the one field wherein we can all learn how to do unselfish work, and rise above the common level of every day life. What is this Congress after all but another name for Progress? Once you are an advocate of the ideals of the Congress, you cannot but advocate progress in all directions. None of us can ignore, for instance, the problem of social reform. We may differ as to methods, but every one who has the aims of the Congress at heart must be working for justice, freedom and purity in social matters as well. Lord Curzon recently described India as the pivot and centre of the British Imperial System, and I may say that the Congress is the pivot and centre of the numerous bodies that are working throughout the country in the direction of progress and modern civilisation. The educative effect of the Congress is indeed great and pervasive. I have no doubt that, as we go on, all those who now stand away from it will, in ever increasing numbers,

come to join its ranks and render its work in future more representative and more useful.

To strengthen the vitality of the Congress, it is necessary to give it a settled constitution. Since the Congress was held in Madras first in 1887, it has been going on along the lines on which it was in a way organised here. The idea of making the constitution of the Congress clear and definite has already engaged your attention more than once. I know the question is beset with difficulties and I hope that the third Madras Congress will be able to solve it satisfactorily. I may point out that, in addition to the constitution, the Congress is also in need of a permanent home, wherein may be gathered all the literature relating to all its varied activities and a useful library may be made to grow to serve us and to serve those that come after us. Besides worthy books and pamphlets on subjects engaging the attention of the Congress from time to time are very much needed to explain and to justify our resolutions and carry the conviction to the minds of all impartial men that we are right and reasonable in our demands. It is now my pleasing duty to ask you to enter upon your work. I have no doubt that, situated as we are, you will, inside as well as outside the Congress hall, conduct yourselves in such a manner as will make it impossible for the most uncharitable of our critics to pass the least unfavourable remark against us. Remember always that the Indian National Congress is the brightest emblem of British rule in India, that it is an annual reminder that Great Britain and India cannot exist apart, that for the prosperity and glory of both they should move hand in hand, and that, in feeling at all events, the Britain should become the India, and the India become the Britain.

Gentlemen, I once more offer you our cordial welcome and invite you to proceed to the business of electing your President for the Fourteenth Indian National Congress.

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In this session 27 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I, II and III expressed grief at and condoled the death of W.E. Gladstone, Sir Lakshmeswar Singh, the Maharaja of



Darbhanga and Sardar Dayal Singh respectively. Resolution IV repeated the protest of the Congress against making an amendment in the criminal law of the country so as to empower magistrates for dealing with cases of sedition. Resolution V extended welcome to the new Viceroy Lord Curzon. Resolution VI repeated the demand of the Congress for land revenue settlement. Resolution VII repeated the demand of the Congress for the abandonment of the Frontier Policy. Resolution VIII objected to the setting up of the Secret Press Committee. Resolution IX criticised the move for the officialisation of the municipal administration of Calcutta and Bombay. Resolution X reiterated the demand of the Congress for the separation of executive and judiciary. Resolution XI repeated the demand of the Congress for civil and military services in India. Resolution XII demanded redressal of the grievances of the Indian settlers in South Africa. Resolution XIV repeated the demand of setting up executive councils for the Governors of Bombay and Madras having three members out of whom one should be an Indian. It also demanded that the appointment of the Governors should not be made strictly from England to the exclusion of the Services in India.

Resolution XV desired repeal of many black regulations. Resolution XVI repeated the demand of the Congress for the Indianisation of public services and the holding of competitive examinations for the ICS simultaneously in England and India. Resolution XVII repeated the demand of the Congress for restoring freedom of the press in territories under British administration in the Native States. Resolution XVIII repeated the demand of the Congress for technical education in India. Resolution XIX set up a committee to finalise rules and regulations of the Constitution of the Congress. Resolution XX was in the nature of an omnibus document repeating the demands of the Congress for trial by jury, proper implementation of the forest laws, and raising of the taxable limit on income from Rs. 500 to 1,000. Resolution XXI repeated the demand of the Congress for the creation of a Legislative Council in the Punjab and the giving of the right of interpellations to the

members of the Central and Provincial Legislative Councils. Resolution XXII desired that the laws for the administration of Berar should be made by the Supreme Legislative Council as these were made for British India proper. Resolution XXIII said that all expenditure incurred on the eradication of plague be borne by the Government and not be the local bodies. Resolution XXIV repeated the trust of the Congress in Naoroji and hoped for his re-election to the House of Commons from Central Finsbury or from some other constituency. Resolution XXV thankfully acknowledged the services of Sir. William Wedderburn and other members of the British Committee and assigned a sum of Rs. 60,000 for certain expenses for the next year. Resolution XXVI said about the reappointment of Hume as the General Secretary and of Wacha as the Joint Secretary of the Congress for the ensuing year. Resolution XXVII fixed the next annual session at Lucknow on a date after Christmas as to be decided afterwards.

#### *The Fifteenth Session (1899)*

This session opened in the city of Lucknow on 27 December and continued till 30th of the month. It was attended by 740 delegates—603 from the North Western Provinces and Oudh, 57 from Bengal and Assam, 36 from Bombay and Sindh, 26 from the Punjab, 12 from Madras and 6 from C. P., Berar and Secunderabad. A notable feature of this session was that it was attended by about 300 Muslim delegates. It was enough to refute the malicious propaganda done by the leaders of the Aligarh movement against the secular character of the national organisation. Another important thing to be noted was that the Lieutenant Governor of the North-Western Provinces (Sir Antony MacDonnell) did not commit the mistake of his predecessor (Sir Auckland Colvin) who had created several problems for the members of the Reception Committee ten years back on the eve of the Allahabad session. Not only this, MacDonnell played a constructive part in putting a check on some possible obstructions to be created by the Government officials. Thus he gave

ample proof of being a man of liberal attitude and wise action.\* For this occasion Bansi Lal Singh wrote his welcome address that owing to his feeble health was read out by Pandit Bishen Narayan Dhar. After this Pandit Bishamber Nath proposed and Nawab Bagar Ali Khan seconded the name of Romesh Chandra Dutt for the presidentship. He was elected and he chaired this session.

### **PURSUE AIMS STEADILY BUT MODERATELY\***

Brother-Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen :

With sentiments of the deepest respect and affection, I beg to offer you all, on behalf of the Reception Committee, most cordial greetings.

It is indeed an honour to me that my colleagues of the Reception Committee should have deemed me worthy to be their representative on this important occasion, to receive and welcome on their behalf so many distinguished representatives of the various communities inhabiting this great Empire. It was a cherished dream of my life, gentlemen, to be able at least once this side of the grave to offer you all who come here from your distant homes, for purposes of deliberating on questions of national well-being, that earnest and enthusiastic welcome which I can hardly venture to convey to you in words, for no words can adequately express what I feel on the present occasion.

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1. The authors of the official report for this session called it "a remarkable event from many points of view, a new epoch in the history of the Indian political reform. It is impossible fully to realise its significance without taking note of the circumstances in which it was held, the peculiar features of its proceedings which distinguish it from the previous sessions, and the remarkably sympathetic, and even cordial recognition that was accorded to it both by the Indian and the Anglo-Indian section of our press."

\*Address written by Bansi Lal Singh, Chairman, Reception Committee, but read out by Pandit Bishen Narayan Dhar at the Lucknow-session held in December, 1899.

Throughout this year I have been in such a precarious state of health, suffering from a malady which at times seemed serious, that I was not quite sure if I should be spared to have the proud privilege of meeting you here to-day, but I thank God that the happy day which I have been looking forward to with so much eager joy and expectation has come, when in my own behalf and that of my colleagues I am able to offer you a warm and cordial welcome.

But while welcoming you, gentlemen, to Lucknow, the Capital of Oudh—the witness of a glorious past and consecrated by immortal memories—I am painfully reminded of the backwardness of this province in education and material prosperity, which are the distinguishing features of some of the more fortunate provinces of this great country. Here unhappily you will find wealth and public spirit generally divorced from each other ; the rich in spirit are as a rule poor in means, while from those who possess wealth and position, the inscrutable wisdom of Providence seems to have withheld the luxury of doing good. The preparations, therefore, which we have been able to make for this Fifteenth Session of the National Congress, though by no means worthy of this great occasion or of you, our honoured guests, are yet the outcome of the sincere support and sympathy of thousands of those men who, if they are not Darbaris and title-holders, possess at least this indefeasible title to our regard, that they are as true and patriotic supporters of the National cause as any that breathe in this ancient and historic land. I should speak in a very apologetic, nay, a humiliating tone if I were referring only to the visible aspect of our arrangements ; but when in its invisible aspect I find it to be the result of the help and co-operation of those of whose weakness and helplessness I am not an inexact image, I cannot help feeling the consolation that if our arrangements are wanting in pomp and show, we are at least in a position to say that the Congress which has met here to-day is emphatically the People's Congress. And I am sure you too, Brother Delegates, will be gratified to find that quiet, and simple, and humble as is the reception which

on behalf of the teeming populations of the United Provinces I offer to you, it is the people's reception.

Gentlemen, if our arrangements are imperfect and quite inadequate to meet your wants and comforts, as we are painfully conscious they are, it is not due to any want of care or exertion on our part. Indeed, gentlemen, it was not without some misgiving that we entered upon the work of preparing ourselves for the most agreeable duty of welcoming you here. There were, we knew, obstacles to be surmounted, local authorities to be conciliated and compromises to be reluctantly accepted before, gentlemen, we could secure sites for the Congress meeting or for the accommodation of delegates. But these are now old stories, and I have no inclination to dwell on them. Many of you, I am sure, have read all about the episode in the newspapers, and how eventually we were able to obtain the tract of land on which our pavillion stands. The unfortunate, though under the circumstances, unavoidable part of the business has been that we have failed to make arrangements for locating you all together. Some in consequence have had to be accommodated in the Segregation Camp, while the rest have had to be scattered in different quarters and localities in the wide city to make the best of residences, good, bad and indifferent, that we have been able to provide for them. But contend as we have had to with so many obstacles, some of them quite unlooked for, I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without inviting your attention to the good will and courtesy invariably shown by the Ruler of this Province in reference to any and every representation made by our Committee to His Honour. It is to his kindly interposition, gentlemen, that we owe this site—the very best in this city—upon which our Pandal stands. I hope therefore that I may be permitted on behalf of this whole assembly to offer Sir Antony MacDonnell our humble and respectful thanks.

Gentlemen, I have just had occasion to allude to our drawbacks. You may probably have read in the papers that a knot

of about 50 Muslim gentlemen, given out as influential Mohammedan residents of the city; some time ago memorialized the Lieutenant-Governor, through the Commissioner of Lucknow, to prohibit the Congress from meeting here. The chief ground for this patriotic request was that delegates from the Deccan would come laden with plague-germs, and would thus seriously endanger the health of the city. These gentlemen very conveniently forgot their own attitude towards the plague restrictions when they were first imposed upon this province. The objection of these gentlemen, however, did not seem convincing enough to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, who quietly rejected the memorial, because he desired to place no unnecessary impediment in the way of the discussion of public questions in a temperate and loyal spirit.

As if this rebuff was not enough for our Anti-Congress lights, they answered it by holding on the 3rd of this month what, we were informed with a flourish of trumpets, was going to be a portentous demonstration as they had succeeded in catching a K.C.I.E. from the ranks of the Oudh Taluqdars to preside at their meeting. The great demonstration has come and gone without doing any sensible damage to the Congress cause, while the presence of about 300 Mohammedan delegates from Lucknow alone clearly indicates that for the Anti-Congress, in these provinces at least, the hour is not yet ripe and the men are not yet come !

I have no inclination to take you into the depths and mazes of motives which now and again give rise to this sort of opposition. A more lucid explanation of the phenomenon cannot be found than in the pregnant words of Sir Charles Dilke : "The official class themselves admit that many of the natives who attack the Congress do so to ingratiate themselves with their British rulers and to push their claims for decorations". That being the case, I do not think we need take much notice of the showy doings of our friends of the opposition.

In our province—and specially in this city—the relations existing between Hindus and Mohammedans are so cordial—for generations past both have lived together so peacefully and amicably that I am confident that discord can never ruffle these happy relations. Our alliance is perhaps even stronger to-day than ever ; for both of us—Hindus and Mohammedans—have met to-day under the stress of common interests and determined to arrive at a common goal.

Gentlemen, Congress principles, based as they are upon the solid foundations of loyalty and patriotism—upon a firm attachment to the British Crown and an unshakable resolve to raise the social and political status of our country—are safe from any oppositions which may be offered to them. The spirit of the age is with them ; the genius of the British Empire is on their side ; they represent the forces which have built up modern civilisation. No hostile forces can arrest the march of the Congress movement. It has lighted beacon on a high rock, against which the waves of opposition will beat in vain.

But opposition, whatever may be its character or force, proves one thing if it proves anything at all, namely, that the cause or the principle against which it is directed, is quietly making headway in some quarter, in spite of, or perhaps because of, the opposition. I need not therefore be at the pains to expose the sham and hollow character of the meeting I have been speaking of, the pretension of its promoters to be the sole and only representatives of the people of Lucknow, like the proverbial three Tailors of the Tooley Street, is falsified as I have already remarked by the very presence in this *Pandal* of so many respectable Mohammedan friends, some of whom are the descendants of the old royal and noble families of Oudh, not only from this city alone but from different parts of India.

The opposition to the Congress in India, gentlemen, has always been of a singularly shy and bashful character. If our opponents object to any of our proposals, why don't they

come in our midst and state their difference? We welcome diversity of views ; we accept the sage's words, that among many counsellors there is wisdom. Free discussion is the *raison d'être* of the Congress movement. Gentlemen, this is the only reasonable and sound platform on which we can all meet on equal terms to discuss public measures and help each other in arriving at correct conclusions in regard to them, and thus be in a position to place them before our rulers. Differences of opinion will exist so long as human society exists, but mutual tolerance and mutual confidence can do much to clear up many misunderstandings, and teach each of the contending parties the utility of looking at things from the standpoint of the other. To hold conflicting views on public questions, gentlemen, is one thing, to take up an attitude of uncompromising hostility is quite another.

As a result of the same spirit of backwardness of our people in these provinces we have another and a yet more numerous class of men, people who while in hearty sympathy with our movement, which they are privately ready to help in every way, are yet afraid to join it openly,—and I think I would be appropriately describing these by calling them our timid and nervous sympathisers who startle at their own shadow and quite lose their balance of mind at the very prospect of being interrogated as to their political creed by an over-inquisitive officialdom.

The only quarter from which we have to reckon with any very formidable opposition is therefore in the ranks of the Anglo-Indian community. But I for one cannot find fault with the attitude thus taken up by them.

It is the old story of want of precise knowledge on the one hand, and of the influence of vested interests at stake on the other. And I am convinced that their opposition will by and by disappear as ignorance gives way to knowledge, and in the light of better information and more cordial understanding, our Anglo-Indian friends come to realize their sacred duty



towards the Empire which their forefathers strove so heroically to build up, and which British Justice alone can maintain.

It would be affectation to deny that in the official class there are some who do not look upon the Congress movement with favour, and who sometimes betray an unnecessary and unjustifiable distrust of educated Indians. The moral influence of these officers upon a good many of us is very great. We feel it most in this province where educational backwardness keeps the people in an undue awe of the powers that be. And it is natural that a good many people should feel too timid to openly join the Congress movement, when they find some officials do not in season and out of season conceal their opinion of those who take part in political movements. And it is curious to observe that so long as our leading men serve the Government as Magistrates, District Judges, High Court Judges, Commissioners and in other high capacities, they are highly spoken of by our Anglo-Indian officials. But as soon as they join the Congress movement and strive for their country's well-being, every attempt is made to belittle their position as leading men, and no opportunity is lost to cover them with invective and abuse. The one certain consequence which this policy is capable of leading to is that, while good and temperate men may be scared away from the Congress, their places will be taken up by more violent and less responsible spirits.

I am sure even the strongest official opponents of Congress do not desire this. To this class of officials well-intentioned no doubt, but wedded to what, I must say, is a suicidal policy, I may be permitted to address one observation. You are foreigners in this country. You do not and, from your exclusive way, cannot know the mind of the people, and the people do not know your mind. But you have by your educational policy which has immortalised the names of Bentinck and Macaulay, created a considerable class of men, filled with your ideas and aspirations, conversant with your manners and customs, attached to your rule by every tie of duty and interest, who are desirous of acting as interpreters between you

and the people placed under your care, and in order to carry out this object, adopt those methods of constitutional agitation which you yourself have taught them. What would be the good of their education if they did not desire that which it has taught them to love and cherish? But now that they have organised themselves into a body and formulated their wants in the most loyal and temperate spirit, is it wise, is it expedient, is it worthy of the great tradition of which you are the heir, that their early efforts for self-improvement, which must be clumsy, should be treated with suspicion, mistrust, and jealousy, that their free speech, encouraged by your own readiness to listen to all honest expressions of opinion, should be construed into disaffection, and a reactionary policy should be adopted to send terror into the people's hearts, to silence and suppress public opinion, and thus to close the only safe and sure avenue, you have, through which you can get access to the real mind of the country? Your most loyal subjects lament the change which has come over your policy. In matters of education, for example, you have adopted a reactionary course which must end in undesirable consequences. You are not on the right road.

The time will come—and the sooner the better—when you will realise that the best friends of your rule are those who understand its manifold blessings, and that the foundations of the British Government will be strengthened, not by alienating but by conciliating the feelings of the educated classes, who here, as elsewhere, are the natural leaders of the masses. Now, gentlemen, whatever may be the answer of the official class to some such appeal as I am making, it is highly gratifying to find that many of them have already begun to see through the unwisdom of blindly setting their faces against a movement, the working of which they have seldom cared to scrutinise or study, but which is the noblest produce of their own government and civilisation. It can hardly be without reason, gentlemen, that some of the most prominent leaders of the community, now retired and therefore far above all party or

social prejudice, have thought fit to raise their voice in condemnation of the system which coolly permits the retention in one hand of two such functions as are associated with judicial and executive work in the country. You all know how some of the greatest names in the judicial annals of the country—men of ripe experience and exceptional knowledge, have pronounced in favour of the separation of the two functions.

It is our humble conviction, gentlemen, that if we go on pursuing our aims steadily, but moderately, and stick to one thing at a time, no Government in the world, much less the just and enlightened Government under which we live, can long refuse to grant our prayers. But I need not dilate upon the advantages of perseverance and moderation, for had you not made these the cardinal principles of our action all along the Congress fabric could not possibly have been kept together to this day, nor could it have succeeded in winning the confidence of some of the most distinguished Indians and Englishmen ; nor, I may add, would it have commanded, as it does today, the respect even of those who do not agree with all its views.

Gentlemen, at your fourteenth session at Madras last year you were pleased to appoint a committee to go into the important question of constitution of the Congress. I beg to suggest that if it could give some of its time to the consideration of what I cannot help calling the present unsatisfactory system of leaving the holding of the future sessions of the Congress to the obliging invitation of local committees distributed all over the country,—a great step in advance will have been taken. The Congress movement, gentlemen, as you all know, has acquired an imperial importance, it no longer befits its dignity to stake its existence as it were on such haphazard support. We are all proud to belong to it ; every one of us naturally feels sorry and disappointed if the part of the country he hails from is passed over in favour of some more fortunate Province in the matter of the pleasure and honour of playing the agreeable role of hosts to the elite of

the Indian community, and in order to discharge this gratifying duty we delightfully incur all manner of expenses to vie with previous receptions. But if you do away with the existing system, although by so doing you may, I am afraid, be rather cruelly depriving one or other of the provinces of the chance of distinction in the field of generous hospitality, you would be knocking on the head a great and serious cause of strain in the long run on the resources of all concerned. Hospitality costs money and has a tendency to curtail, if not altogether cripple, the resources of all Standing Congress Committees. Why not rather devote the large sums of money thus expanded, year after year, to the furtherance of the objects of the sacred cause in the other way, and thereby strengthen the foundations and ensure the stability of the movement. The labours of the proposed working or executive committees might be greatly lightened if they have a steady income from subscriptions. If you do not mind, I would suggest a register of members to be opened at each centre and subscriptions in small sums annually collected. Even the poor would not object to pay small fees, while the drain on the purse of the well-to-do would be proportionately lessened. Delegates to the Congress in future might be appointed by the suffrages of the registered members from amongst their own body. A change of system on some such lines will not only mean a fair distribution of the burdens on all supporters of the cause, but will also enlarge the basis of the electorate—which will be no small advantage—by drawing in so many more adherents. The departure will also ensure the Congress Meetings being held at any time or place with the maximum of facility and the minimum of inconvenience and worry. You will have of course to keep up a permanent establishment under your able General Secretary. I for one no longer see any necessity for you to lay out large sums of money for the erection of *Pandals*. A spacious Darbar tent, in my humble opinion, will be quite good enough for all purposes, and would moreover be a permanent thing. You might even profitably invest in a set of suitable furniture, with all necessary appertenances, and thus have a moving camp in future to be fixed where it may beforehand be arrang-

ed. For a great movement like ours, it would always be less expensive, gentlemen, in the long run, to have everything of a permanent nature. The General Secretary, then, can always be in better touch with the centres of activity and in consultation with the provincial or local committees settle the question of site, accommodation for the delegates, etc. With all the requisite information thus at his finger's ends, that energetic officer can, year after year, without the least botheration, notify to all concerned at what suitable centre the next sitting of the Congress is to take place. This would save poor Reception Committees the trouble and expense that they have now to undergo for the execution of the work thrown on them. Time and labour thus economised can be employed better in the work proper of the Congress, not only at the time it holds its sessions, but through out the year.

Having thus attempted a rough and rapid sketch of what may be done in the direction of what I cannot help looking upon as a desirable change in the future progress of the movement, I leave the question of details to be determined by your distinguished Committee, should you care to approve my humble suggestions.

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In this session 22 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I reiterated the demand of the Congress for separation of executive and judiciary. Resolution II regretted the introduction of the Land Alienation Bill in the Supreme Legislative Council with a view to restrict transfer of land by sale or mortgage. Resolution III said that the expenses on 20,000 British troops be borne by the British Exchequer. Resolution IV protested against the introduction of gold standard system in India. Resolution V repeated the demand of the Congress for better civil and medical services in the country. Resolution VI signified protest of the Congress against the proposed Press Bill to curtail freedom of dissemination of useful information in the country. Resolution VII repeated the protest of the Congress against officialisation of municipal administration in Bengal and Bombay. Resolution VIII said that the Directors

of Public Instruction in Madras and Bombay should not be given any power to take action against the managers and teachers of the aided institutions for their taking part in the political movements. Resolution IX desired that the laws relating to the sale of liquor at retail shops be made more stringent and that such shops should not be established anywhere in the country without the consent of the inhabitants of the area. Resolution X has an importance of its own as it dealt with the adoption of the rules of Constitution of the Congress. It said :

“1. The object of the Indian National Congress shall be to promote by constitutional means the interests and the well-being of the people of the Indian Empire.

2. It shall ordinarily meet once a year at such time and in such place as shall have been resolved on by the last preceding Congress. Provided that the Indian Congress Committee, as hereinafter provided for, may in case of necessity, change the place or time of the meeting of the Congress ; provided also that in case of emergency the Indian Congress Committee may convene an extraordinary session of the Congress at such time and place as may be determined by them.

3. It shall consist of delegates elected by political associations or other bodies, and by public meetings.

4. Its affairs shall be managed by a Committee, styled the Indian Congress Committee, consisting of 45 members elected by the Congress, 40 of whom shall be elected upon the recommendations of the different Provincial Congress Committees, and in the absence of such Committees, by the delegates of the respective Provinces in Congress assembled, in the manner hereinbelow laid down, that is to say :

For Bengal including Assam	8
For Bombay including Sind	8
For Madras including Secunderabad	8

For North-Western Provinces including Oudh	6
For Punjab	4
For Berar	3
For Central Provinces	

The term of office of the members of the Committee shall be the period intervening between two ordinary meetings of the Congress.

5. The Indian Congress Committee shall meet at least three times a year, once immediately after the Congress, once during the year between the months of June and October, as may be determined upon by the Committee, and once immediately before the Congress, at such place as the Committee may find convenient.

6. The Indian Congress Committee shall have an Honorary Secretary and a paid Assistant Secretary, with suitable office staff, for which a sum of Rs. 5,000 shall be granted annually, one half of which shall be provided by the Reception Committee of the place where the last Congress is held, and the other half by the Reception Committee of the place where the next succeeding Congress is to be held.

The Secretary to the Indian National Congress shall be the Honorary Secretary of the Committee.

7. Provincial Congress Committees shall be organised at the capitals of the different Presidences and Provinces of India for the purpose of carrying on the work of political education, on lines of general appreciation of British rule and of constitutional action for the removal of its defects, throughout the year, by organising Standing Congress Committees, holding Provincial Conferences, and by such other means as they may deem proper, in consultation with the Indian Congress Committee, for furthering the objects of the Congress. They shall be the responsible agents of the Indian Congress Committee for their respective Provinces, and shall submit annual reports of their work to that Committee.

8. The nomination of the President, the drafting of Resolutions, and all other business in connection with the Congress, shall be done by the Indian Congress Committee. It shall also, subject to the approval of the Congress, frame rules for the election of delegates, the election of speakers, and the conduct of the proceedings of the Congress.

9. Rules and bye-laws shall be framed by the Provincial Congress Committees for the election of members, the conduct of their own proceedings, and other matters appertaining to their business. All such rules and bye-laws shall be subject to the approval of the Indian Congress Committee.

10. A Committee, styled the British Congress Committee, shall be maintained in England, which shall represent there the interests of the Indian National Congress. The amount requisite for the expenses of the said Committee shall be determined and voted by the Congress, and the amount so voted shall be raised by the Indian Congress Committee in such manner as may be determined upon by that body from time to time.

11. The Indian Congress Committee shall take such steps as they may deem fit to raise a permanent fund for carrying on the work of the Indian National Congress; and such fund shall be invested in the name of 7 trustees, one from each Province in India, to be appointed by the Congress.

*Members of the Indian Congress Committee Appointed  
by the Congress under the above Resolution*

*General Members* : W.C. Bonnerji, Surendranath Bannerjee, P. Ananda Charlu, P.M. Metha, and R.N. Mudholkar.

*Bengal* : A.M. Bose, Khalicharan Bannerjee, Bhupendra Nath Basu, Baikunthnath Sen, Ambikacharan Mazumdar, J. Ghosal, Aswini Kumar Dutt and Dipnarain Sinha.



*N.W.P. and Oudh* : Bishambhar Nath, Ganga Prasad Varma, Madan Mohan Malaviya, A. Nundy, Bishan Narayan Dar and Hafiz Abdur Rahim.

*Bombay* : D.E. Wacha, G. Chandravarkar, W.A. Chambers, R.M. Sayani, Daji Abaji Khare, Chimanlal H. Setalvad, R.P. Karandikar and Tahiram Khem Chand.

*Punjab* : Kanaihia Lal, Jhenda Singh, Harkishan Lal and Jaishi Ram.

*Central Provinces* : Bapurao Dada, Bhagirath Prasad and H.V. Kelkar.

*Berar* : Deorao Vinayak, M.V. Joshi and G.S. Khaparde.

*Madras* : C. Vijairaghavachari, C. Jumbulinga Mudaliar, G. Venkataratnam, C. Sankaran Nair, P. Rangia Naidu, P. Ramachandaran Pillai, G. Subramaniya Iyer and Ryrn Nambiar."

Resolution XI thankfully appreciated the services of Sir William Wedderburn and other members of the British Committee and assigned a sum of Rs. 54,000 for expenses during the next year. Resolution XII repeated the demand of the Congress for the appointment of the Governors of Bombay and Madras strictly from England to the exclusion of the Services in India and the establishment of executive councils under them having three members each out of whom one should be Indian. Resolution XIII said about reforms to prevent famines in India. Resolution XIV was in the nature of an omnibus document that repeated the demands of the Congress as trial by jury, proper implementation of the forest laws, raising of income taxable limit to Rs. 1,000, and holding of the ICS examination simultaneously in England and India. Resolution XV repeated the demand of the Congress for removing restrictions on the freedom of press in territories under British administration in the Native States. Resolution XVI repeated the demand of the Congress for technical education in India. Resolution XVIII repeated the demand of the

Congress for the creation of Legislative Council in the Punjab and giving of right of interpellations to the members of the Supreme and Provincial Legislative Councils. Resolution XVIII repeated the demand of the Congress for the administration of Berar according to the laws made by the Supreme Legislative Council as those for British India proper. Resolution XIX repeated the demand of the Congress that the expenses on plague relief administration should be borne by the Government and not by the local bodies. Resolution XX reposed trust of the Congress in Naoroji and hoped for his re-election to the House of Commons from Central Finsbury or from any other Labour constituency. Resolution XXI said about the appointment of Hume as the General Secretary and of Wacha as the Joint Secretary of the Congress for the ensuing year. Finally, Resolution XXI said that an agency be appointed in England for the purpose of organising, in concert with the British Congress Committee, public meetings for the dissemination of information on Indian matters and that funds be raised for that purpose.

*The Sixteenth Session (1900)*

This session opened in the city of Lahore on 29 December and sat for three days. It was attended by 567 delegates—421 from the Punjab, 57 from Bombay and Sindh, 39 from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, 38 from Bengal and Assam, 9 from Madras, and 3 from the Central Provinces, Berar and Secunderabad. The weather was at its peak chill and yet the session was well attended as the people knew that, in the words of Mrs. Annie Besant, “if the Punjab winters are cold, Punjab hearts are warm”. Rai Bahadur Kali Prasanna Roy delivered the welcome address. After that Surendranath Banerjea proposed and Lala Hans Raj seconded the name of N. G. Chandravarkar for the presidentship. He was elected and he chaired the session.

### **THE ONLY GENUINE LINK BETWEEN THE RULERS AND THE RULED\***

**Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen :**

On behalf of the Reception Committee and of the people of the Punjab, I extend to you my hand of welcome. And embracing you in a thoroughly Indian fashion I give you my sincere and heart-overflowing welcome. I am fully aware that our Province labours under the disadvantage of being situated in a remote part of India and is not in some respects as advanced as other Provinces which are more fortunate. It is removed from the centres of Trade, Commerce and other influences tending to advance the material prosperity. Our resources are scanty and limited. Our workers are few ; and with the best of efforts I am afraid we have not succeeded in doing as much for you as we would have liked to. The conveniences, comforts and luxuries which other rich Provinces can command are not so easily accessible to us. But though poor in this respect we still possess a willing heart and we have put forth our utmost efforts to give you a warm and cordial reception.

I feel great pleasure and pride in giving you this welcome within the four walls of a brick-built Hall dedicated to the sacred memory of Mr. Bradlaugh. His straightforwardness, sincere and unflinching convictions and his advocacy of the cause of the weak and the poor made him tower high over others. He conquered the unpopularity he met with at the outset of his career and ended in commanding the respect of his own countrymen and of the Parliament in whose deliberations he took an active and useful part. In Bombay he promised to take up the cause of India and after his return to England he fulfilled his promise by introducing in Parliament a Bill for the reform of the Legislative Councils of India. The sympathetic and catholic nature of the Bill frightened the

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\*Address delivered by K.P. Roy, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Lahore Congress held in December, 1900.

English Government and by anticipation they promised to grant the small boon which we now enjoy. If his life had been spared he would have been the true champion of India and would have richly deserved to be called "The member of India". Sir Henry Fowler to make his speech attractive and effective called every member of Parliament a member of India. Would that his remark were true? But it was a mere clap-trap invented for securing his object. There were various suggestions made in different parts of India to erect a permanent monument to the memory of Mr. Bradlaugh but were not carried out. So in erecting this Hall we have merely acted in response to our grateful feelings and in obedience to the consensus of opinion of educated India.

Moreover, this Hall secures the permanency of the Congress cause in the Punjab. The grievances of the Reception Committees and their humiliations in securing a suitable piece of land for the Congress Pandal are well known and specially in Upper India. To obviate these we have bought the land and built this Hall upon it at great expense and self-sacrifice. It will form the centre for all political, social and other agitations for reform in the Punjab. It is destined to form an epoch in the annals of the Congress movement.

I may be permitted to point out that the contributions to the building of the Hall have all come from the people's pocket. There remain at present but few old families of *Raises* in the Punjab and these get frightened at the very shadow of displeasure of the powers that be. They overburden us with expressions of good wishes, but they will on no account put their hands in their pockets to give us pecuniary help. They imagine that their action in this direction, if brought to the notice of the authorities, may work to their injury.

They are not entirely in the wrong, as some officials in season and out of season express themselves adversely to the Congress. Thus our *Raises* are merely our timid and nervous well-wishers. Regarding new founded families it holds good

generally everywhere that the founders of such families are usually brave and generous men. They are as clever in making money as they are generous in spending it. Their heirs are mainly pigmies in comparison. Having inherited large fortunes they become covetous of titles and honours. Thus neglecting the cause of their country and countrymen they are driven by the pleasure of the powers that be like a weather-cock. There remain then the middle classes and the masses who have cheerfully responded to our call. Thus the Hall where we meet this afternoon is emphatically the people's own Hall.

In the Lucknow Congress we had 300 Mohammedan Delegates. The same number of Mohammedan Delegates ought not to be expected in the Punjab, though it also contains a large Mohammedan population. It must be remembered that the majority of the followers of the Prophet in this Province are agriculturists, pure and simple. They have little or no education. The Punjab Land Alienation Act has stirred them up to an extent that they don't know whether they are standing upon their heels or upon their heads. Some of the few families which out of this community have received any education are unfortunately influenced by motives not beneficial to the Congress cause. The Mohammedans of the Frontier Districts are shrewd and liberal politicians. They do understand what is good for their country but they have neither education nor power of organisation. Thus it has not been considered advisable to approach them and to bring them under the Congress Camp in a non-Regulation Province like the Punjab. But I have hope that with the progress of education they will form the bulwark of the Congress cause.

And here I cannot refrain from making a passing allusion to a new departure on the part of some Mohammedan gentlemen at least of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh. This was once the centre of opposition to the Congress, but now there are searchings of heart as to whether it was wise to continue this opposition and some of them have been bold enough to declare that the time had arrived when they should

throw in their lot with us. We have it on the authority of Mr. Alfred Nundy, our Assistant Secretary, who has been making a tour through a good part of India, that he received everywhere the greatest kindness and sympathy from Mohammedan gentlemen, who subscribed liberally to the Congress funds. One step forward is necessary and that will probably be taken ere the Congress meets again in this Hall. Whenever they do so they may rely on receiving a warm welcome from us,

I know that my brother Delegates are very indulgent. They make themselves comfortable under any circumstances. Without uttering a word of complaint they delight in singing the praises of the Reception Committees and vie with each other in heaping encomiums upon their devoted heads. Relying upon their indulgence I proceed onwards.

But before I do so I have a painful duty to perform. On the previous occasion, when the Congress sittings were held in the capital of the Punjab, the late Sirdar Dayal Singh, the premier nobleman of this Province, worthily filled this chair. He has been cut off in the prime of life and his death is a national loss. His public spirit, patriotic ideas and liberal and enlightened principles were like a beacon light to the people of the Punjab. He alone came forward from amongst his peers to guide the people of the Punjab in their career of progress and enlightenment. By his birth, position and principles he was their natural leader. His last will and testament is a standing monument to his name. By this he has given away his whole immense estate to the public cause. It sets an example to other noblemen of India how to utilise their wealth for the good of their country and countrymen.

The death of our late lamented friend Mr. Jaishi Ram is deeply mourned by the people of the Punjab. He was the light and life of the Congress cause in this Province, and his passing away at this inopportune moment has not only cast a gloom over the educated classes, but has redoubled the serious

difficulties we had to contend against in making the necessary arrangement for your reception. His indomitable spirit, his genial disposition, his capacity for work, and his overflowing patriotism and his enthusiasm for the public good made him a necessary factor in every public movement. They endeared him to the people and made his name a household word in the Panjab. Unfortunately he has been nipped in the bud. The budding forth of his powers if spared would have been. I venture to say, an object of respect and admiration to the whole of India.

The Province of the Punjab, though otherwise poor, is rich in spirit. The martial spirit shown in battle-fields either in defending the Indian Empire or in serving outside Her Majesty the Queen Empress of India has elicited admiration and praise from all quarters. In the old days it was the lot of the Punjab to defend invasions from the North-West of India and to hang on and harass the invaders on their return with loot from rich towns of India. Under the benign regime of our beloved Queen the Punjab is progressing with gigantic strides to emulate other provinces of India in Science, Art and Literature. The religious spirit of the Punjab is shown in the pure and earnest teachings of Guru Nanak. This religious spirit has a peculiar tendency to unifications. Here we find the unit of the Aryan race which has subdivided itself into manifold forms, in civilising the rest of India. And you, my brother delegates, have now come back to the fountain-head of the unit of the Aryan race. In the Sikh religion this spirit of unification has found a natural outlet. Guru Nanak by his teachings desired to unite Hindus of all castes and ranks, and to bring in, if possible, the Moslem inhabitants of this Province in the same fold. He aimed at uniting the inhabitants of the Province for a common cause, a common benefit and for common blessings.

But his success was limited ; for it is a mistake to suppose that the Sikh nation is of one caste and has welded together the Brahmans, Khatries, Aroras and Jats into the one and the same caste. It has done nothing of the kind. The Brahmins

and other castes retain their distinguishing features. They marry in their own castes and no intermarriage is allowed. But in spite of all this the Sikh religion has wonderfully united them in spirit and enabled them to present a common front to aggression from without any dissension from within. In dealing with modern Punjab I do not speak of the Brahmo Samaj here as it has come from without and its Church is universal, but I am bound to notice the Arya Samaj which, though founded by an outsider, is an indigenous product of this Province. Its religious unity is a wonderful phenomena of the time. This spirit is being gradually extended elsewhere and will, I doubt not, in course of time, help the cause of unity in other parts of India. The Punjab is called the land of five rivers. Its rivers otherwise fitful and wild in their career have sisterly affections for each other. After traversing distant tracts they unite with one another and finally embrace the Indus and with one big volume of unity discharge themselves into the bosom of the ocean to rest there in peace.

I have no mind to enter into apologies for the Congress and its workings. It has come into existence in fullness of time and has a mission to fulfil. We must obey the mandate from above and manfully and loyally stand by it.

I am glad I am relieved of the task of defending the Congress, which chairmen of other Reception Committees on previous occasions felt themselves constrained to undertake. They did it ably and to the satisfaction of every reasonable and unprejudiced mind. The Congress is now in its 16th year. It has passed the critical period of infancy and is now approaching towards manhood. According to Indian law, whether, Hindu or Mohammedan, it has attained its majority and can therefore conduct business and enter into valid obligations without the necessity of a guardian. We in India spoil our sons by too much tutelage and destroy in them the spirit of self-reliance. I consider myself, therefore, relieved of the task of posing here as a guardian of the Congress. The achievements of the infant Congress are too well known and need not be recounted here.



The life of every hero points back to some striking deeds of childhood, wherein lay the basis of future glory. I am no prophet and no enthusiast, but even my cold and calculating nature compels me to believe that the Congress has before it a glorious future.

It will no doubt undergo some changes with the growth of life, take cognisance of matters which from want of knowledge and experience have hitherto been neglected, awaken new energies and divert them into new channels, but with all these changes and improvements it will never lose its identity, and in its full grown maturity will still retain characteristics which will forcibly recall to mind that infant which was ushered into the world with sacred solemnity and maintained and nurtured with more than parental care. Some from selfish motives and others from ignorance do not accord to the Congress the treatment it rightly deserves ; still judging from the past and conscious of its aims and objects I have no misgivings as to its brilliant future. To the impetuous and impatient who eagerly look for immediate results I would say that the period of 16 years in the life of a national movement is just like a drop in the ocean.

To steer a national movement to success requires continued endurance, persistent and well-sustained efforts, untiring zeal and never-failing enthusiasm for many long years. The people who break down at first efforts and do not steadily continue can never secure success and do not deserve to be a nation. The ancient religion of India teaches us to work and labour from a pure sense of duty without at all caring for results. The principles which Sri Krishna propounded to Arjuna in Bhagwat Gita ought to be the motto of every true and sincere patriot.

Though the Congress can do without a guardian, it still stands in need of friends and guides. It is peculiarly fortunate for us that Messrs. Hume, Wedderburn and Naoroji, the three grand old men, three times great and three times good, have volunteered at great self-sacrifice to act as such. The manifesto recently issued by them is a masterful exposition of the

aims and objects of the Congress, its past achievements and its future expectations. It tries to open the eyes of Government to the disastrous consequences which might ensue without such a Congress, and tries to persuade it by cogent and unanswerable reasons to utilise this gigantic movement for the benefit of the rulers and the ruled.

These friends of India by their position and experience are well fitted for the task they have generously undertaken. It cannot be said that they are inclined to support the subjects against the rulers for the majority of them come from the ruling race and for several years occupied high official positions in India. They are actuated by patriotic motives and by catholic and sympathetic hearts in the labour of love they have undertaken for the benefit of India and for placing the British regime on a firm and broad basis.

I think it advisable to make no concealment of the fact that from distant and obscure quarters whisperings are heard that these Englishmen influenced by love for their own country have invented and kept up this wonderful machinery of the Congress as a safety-valve for the many defects of the British Government. The Congress meets year by year and the members thereof make speeches, stirring and eloquent, pointing out the defects of the Government and stating their grievances in a constitutional manner. After having exhausted themselves by the freedom of speech allowed to them, they disperse and but little is heard either of them or of the Congress for nearly another year. The Government makes a little concession here and carries out a little reform there, but in spite of these annual demonstrations it moves on its old course as if nothing had happened. Thus discontent openly expressed and freely ventilated is deprived of its sting and is not brooded over in silence so that secret societies and conspiracies are effectually prevented from coming into existence. Therefore, they argue that this political movement being on the whole for the benefit of the rulers was brought into existence by gentlemen belonging to the ruling race. But, brother delegates,

I cannot too positively assert that there can be no greater misconception than this. It is a slur upon the generous and benevolent efforts of our good and great men for ameliorating the condition of the people of India and thereby benefiting the British Government. But I mention this only to put every one interested in the British regime and the welfare of its Indian subjects on his guard against the insidious insinuations of hostile critics. The Congress movement was set on foot by educated Indians and by disinterested and sympathising Englishmen to help an alien Government in ruling India in a just and humane manner worthy of the traditions of the English nation.

It is for the Government to see how far it will utilise such a powerful agency created for its benefit at immense self-sacrifice.

It is high time that the Congress should have a constitution of its own. Nothing can live and flourish without a good and sound constitution. It has now arrived at a stage when it has become necessary to give it a good constitution so that it may extend its sphere of usefulness and may enjoy a long lease of life. It must work for the whole year through the different provinces in India, collate facts and reasons, figures and statistics, take a note of important grievances and suggest remedies and finally submit them embodied in reports for the consideration of the Congress. The Lucknow Congress aided by some of the delegates of this Province has given us a bare skeleton of the Congress constitution, but it requires to be filled up with flesh and blood. I hope, brother delegates, you will give your special attention to this matter and I pray that your efforts in this direction may be crowned with success.

The rich provinces have their disadvantages in comparison with a poor province. The struggle for existence is more keen and people have larger ambitions to satisfy. They are obliged to snatch sleep and rest from their ever busy life. Their leaders are many and thus great difficulty is experienced in

achieving any practical results. Therefore I would take the liberty to suggest that the services of some of the delegates of poor Punjab may be availed of for furthering the national cause.

The Congress is really the only true interpreter between the rulers and the ruled, both of whom suffer from a want of a proper understanding. I think it is advisable that Congress should take upon itself to remove as many of these misunderstandings as it possibly can. I know that it will be a Herculean task and many difficulties will have to be overcome. But if we want to be really useful to our country and countrymen, the Congress will have to do this sooner or later. I am aware that the work which the Congress leaders are doing at a great self-sacrifice is a thankless job. Some people, on the one hand, think that the Congress is composed of a body of moderate men who ask the Government far much less than is actually required. The Government, on the other hand, charges them with asking too much and is as much surprised as were the Directors of the Parish House at the prayer of Oliver Twist. But anyhow the Congress has managed to live and work for several years in spite of these difficulties. Its patriotic zeal and sincere loyalty have been unflinching. Thus encouraged by the past I take the liberty to suggest that we should conduct our proceedings in a more useful and comprehensive manner. To do so the Congress will have to divide itself into Sub-Committees. Each Sub-Committee must consist of really able and painstaking members favourably inclined by temperament, study and taste to deal with the subjects entrusted to them. After due enquiry and deliberation the Sub-Committees should submit a careful and lucid report to the Congress for its final decision. The reports of these Sub-Committees supported by facts and reasons will supply the place of many stirring and eloquent speeches and their advocacy in the Congress will be entrusted to such speakers as may be selected by the Indian Congress Committee. It goes without saying that this Committee will always select practised and well-known speakers to address the Congress generally. If

we wish to make the Congress useful and business-like we will have sooner or later to adopt some such scheme as suggested above.

I would now beg to draw your attention to the British Committee in London. Its usefulness cannot be too much valued. We here in India may hold as many Congresses as we like, but in so doing we really cry in a wilderness. The ears of the Indian bureaucracy stuffed with Anglo-Indian prejudices are very seldom lent to our representations. The Calcutta Municipal Act and the Punjab Land Alienation Act amongst others are standing illustrations of this fact.

It has been truly said that India is being ruled by an irresponsible Government. In theory the Indian Government is responsible to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of State is responsible to the Parliament but the Parliament, as we all know, is ever ready to adopt the views of the Secretary of State and takes little or no interest in the affairs of India. Thus it all depends upon the personnel, first, of the Secretary of State and, then, of the Viceroy of India, so that the whole thing is reduced to chance ; and India, except in a few notable instances, is on the losing side. It becomes evident then that an agitation must be kept up in England and this agitation to be successful, must be put on an organised basis and under an efficient control. Hence the necessity of the British Committee.

We must undeceive the British people as to Indian affairs and explain and teach them the heavy responsibility they have undertaken in governing the Indian Empire with a population of 300 millions.

At present very little notice is taken of Indian affairs in the House of Commons. The members are pledged to their constituents to do the best they can for them and to give effect to their wishes on public questions. It is therefore essential to approach these constituents with proper facts and figures as

they are partly ignorant and partly indifferent as to the condition of India. If a few competent Indians would lend their services to the British Committee, they would be rendering it the most invaluable aid. As to the journal *India* its cheapness and usefulness are unquestionable and it is deserving of unstinted support whether by subscriptions or donations. It ought to be the sacred duty of every province to pay up regularly the sum promised by it for the British Committee and *India*. At the same time it ought to be borne in mind that India is a poor country, and the expenditure under both these heads must be reduced to such proportions that the liability can easily be met by us.

I rather think that the activities of the British Committee and *India* should be extended to a larger sphere but can only be done if competent Indians will volunteer their services as has often been pressed upon us by Messrs Hume, Wedderburn and Naoroji, and this is the best way to repay the debt immense of endless gratitude we owe them. It is high time that we should come forward to render them substantial help.

It is true that Asiatics and especially Indians are by nature averse to agitation. The Hindus for centuries lived contentedly under the regime of Hindu Rajas. They by their religion and moral teachings were self-contained and considered it a weakness and sin to complain. The law of *Karma* had its full sway over them. It was the duty of kings to treat their subjects as sons, inquire and find out their grievances and to remedy them to the best of their powers. Every misfortune, famine, plague, and other evils used to be attributed to the depravity of the kings, whose duty it was by devotion, piety, and religious exercises to drive away such misfortunes. It was an absolute form of Government pure and simple, but it was the best of its kind, tempered with parental affections. The typical Raja Ram Chandra of Ajudhia parted with his beloved wife Sita in order to remove the discontent of his subjects and to get them firmly attached to the throne. Even under the Mohammedan rule there was no agitation. The relations between the rulers

and the subjects were such that the former had complete confidence in the latter in so far as to select from amongst them their trusted counsellors. The most noted Finance Minister was a Hindu, and many a Commander-in-Chief leading armies to the field of battle was chosen from our race. But the times have changed and the alien Government now ruling over us has entirely different ideas and constitution. The English Government though democratic at home is imperialistic and bureaucratic here. So agitation is the rule. If we wish to live upon two meals a day we must conform our ways to theirs and carry on an agitation with untiring and persistent zeal. Thus it was that our political movement came into existence. It was at first covered with ridicule and contempt ; it soon passed that stage and has perhaps given rise to a little irritation in some quarters and indifference in others. It will be a disgrace if we retreat from the cause frightened by such irritation and indifference. I assure you that this irritation will subside and is gradually subsiding and the proposals of the Congress will in course of time be adopted one by one and wonder will be expressed that they were not adopted earlier.

From what I have said above it should not be supposed that I am in any way against the holding of the Congress in India annually as heretofore. This spectacle of eminent and self-sacrificing patriots gathered together from different quarters of India is worth having at any cost. The different scattered units of the race are joined together by the mysterious influence of common suffering and a common cause. Its advantages are many and so well known that I will not waste your time in recapitulating them. But care should be taken to devise a scheme to reduce its expenditure and to bring it within the power of every province or part of a province however small or poor to welcome the sittings of the Congress.

Provinces should not vie with each other in making the reception grand and grander each year and thereby making it some day an impossibility.

The emulation should be directed towards improving the condition of the Congress by well considered schemes. What is needed is useful and substantial work and not pomp and show.

Gratitude compels me to take you back to the ancient time when a small band of Parsis to avoid persecutions at home came and settled in a remote corner of India under Hindu kings. They were loyal to the throne, respected cows and Brahmans and bore their allegiance with glad and contented hearts. They got themselves incorporated into the Hindu race. The Hindu kings and their subjects always considered them as their best friends.

By a change of fortune the Hindus have become fellow subjects with the Parsis and the latter were trying hard to better the condition of India socially and politically. They have repaid and are repaying their debt to India with more than compound interest. Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, the eminent Parsi Indian, has earned the gratitude of the whole of India by devoting his life to India's cause. He has opened the eyes of the world that the reputed wealth of India is a myth and that she is the poorest country in the world. He is looked up to by educated India as its natural leader. He is the grand old man of India and his name has become a household word throughout the length and breadth of India.

Mr. Tata, another Parsi Gentleman has made a princely gift of 30 lakhs for original research in India. Opinions may differ as to the usefulness of the objects or the manner in which this gift is to be utilised but the generosity of the honour will always command respect and admiration. Would that the Maharajas, Rajas, Princes and Chiefs of India were to follow his noble example in utilising their riches for the benefit of India and the Indians. Mr. Mehta, the foremost of Congressmen, is an ornament to India and the Indian people are naturally very proud of him. His abilities and versatile talents are always being impressed in the service of the



country. Mr. Malabari, distinguished both for his literary tastes and for being a reformer, is indefatigable in his attempts to ameliorate the condition of India. His recent poetical effusions are the landmark of the time and can stand on the same level with *Bharat Bilap* and *Bharat Sangit* of our popular poet Babu Hem Chander Bannerji. The stirring poetic appeals of Mr. Malabari are sure to impress and move every heart. Mr. Wacha, the General Secretary of the Congress, another Parsi gentleman, is the last but not the least. He is the best friend of India, and holds the position of General Secretary by reason of his unswerving zeal for India's welfare.

We must remember that the Congress has now stepped on the first rung in the ladder of manhood. It is a very critical period in the life of every being. Though the Congress requires no guardian, it needs trustworthy and faithful servants to carry on its business with zeal and sincerity. Those of us who have been neglectful of its interests, those of us who may have wasted its resources, those of us who may have availed of its opportunities for self-aggrandisement and self-glorification, in short, those of us who have fallen short of the mark should take warning henceforth. The Congress on attaining its majority is sure to an account of its affairs, check them with critical and searching eyes and to come down with unsparing wrath upon those who will be found wanting.

I know that the wheel of Congress is now running smoothly upon level ground. We sleep whilst the wheel is moving slowly and regularly, being absorbed in pleasant dreams of unopposed success. So now the danger to the Congress proceeds from within and not from without, from indifferent supporters and not from opponents. If I had time and inclination I would gladly create a Raja Sheo Prasad or a patriotic league or any other anti-Congress agitation to rouse the drowsiness of *Arya Varta* from their unworthy sleep and indifference. Thus redoubled energy is now absolutely necessary to prolong the life and prosperity of the Congress.

I earnestly hope that all of us will worthily respond to the call.

I am glad that the Congress has attained its majority on the land of the five rivers. At the budding of manhood it is sure to receive all the invigorating and beneficial influence of this place. I pray that the Congress may go forth from this land to combat the keen struggles which await it in the future, hardy and martial, enduring and practical and imbued with the spirit of economy and unification.

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In this session 25 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I provided for the amendment of Rule 4 of the Constitution. It said :

“Its affairs shall be managed by a Committee styled the Indian Congress Committee consisting of, besides the ex-officio members referred to below, 45 Members elected by the Congress, 40 of whom shall be elected upon the recommendations of the different Provincial Congress Committees, and, in the absence of such Committees, by the delegates of the respective Provinces in Congress assembled, in the manner herein below laid down, that is to say :

For Bengal including Assam 7 ; Bombay including Sindh 7 ; Madras 7 ; N.W.P. including Oudh 7 ; Punjab 6 ; Berar 3 ; and Central Provinces 3.

The ex-officio members shall be the President of the Congress and President-elect from the day of his nomination, the Ex Presidents of the Congress, the Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Congress, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, the Secretary of the Reception Committee to be nominated by the Reception Committee.

The term of office of the Members of the Committee shall be the period intervening between two ordinary meetings of the Congress.”

Resolution II demanded an enquiry into the economic conditions of the country. Resolution III repeated the demand of the Congress for the establishment of a Military College in India and employment of the native Indians in high defence services. Resolution IV demanded introduction of the system of election in the governing bodies of the Universities. Resolution V desired employment of the Indians in civil services. Resolution VI repeated the demand of the Congress for separation of executive and judicial functions. Resolution VII thanked the Viceroy for his services in meeting the problem created by famine conditions. Resolution VIII repeated the demand of the Congress for introduction of technical education in the country. Resolution IX repeated the demand of the Congress for the administration of Berar according to the laws made by the Supreme Legislative Council as in other parts of British India proper. Resolution X was in the nature of an omnibus document and repeated the demands of the Congress as suitable amendments in the Arms Act, discontinuance of the grant of Exchange Compensation Allowance to the non-domiciled European and Eurasian employees of the Government, reduction of salt duty, trial by jury, proper implementation of the forest laws, raising of income tax limit to Rs. 1,000, Indianisation of public services, and holding of examinations for the ICS simultaneously in England and India.

Resolution XI demanded more grants to the Government of India from the British exchequer as recommended by the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure. Resolution XII demanded more attention of the Congress to the problem of industrial and technical education in the country. Resolution XIII said about the setting up of a Committee of Congress leaders headed by P.M. Mehta to submit a memorial to the Viceroy drawing his attention to the long-standing demands of the Congress. Resolution XIV urged that Punjab be made a Regulation Province. Resolution XV demanded stringent application of the liquor laws. Resolution XVI expressed satisfaction of the Congress at the election of W.S. Caine to the English Parliament and reposed its confidence in him as a

trusted friend of the people. Resolution XVII assigned a sum of Rs. 30,000 to the British Committee for its expenses for the next year. Resolution XVIII said about the opening of engineering colleges in the country. Resolution XIX thankfully appreciated the services of Sir William Wedderburn, Dadabhai Naoroji and A.O. Hume. Resolution XX desired removal of all restrictions on the Indian settlers in South Africa. Resolution XXI appreciated the idea of the opening of Agricultural Banks in India and demanded that qualified Indian people be nominated on their Committees. Resolution XXII expressed grief at and condoled the death of Jaishi Ram. Resolution XXIII appreciated the land assessment work of the Government. Resolution XXIV protested against the penal provisions of the Mines Bill. Finally, Resolution XXV said about the reappointment of Hume as the General Secretary and of Wacha as the Joint Secretary of the Congress for the ensuing year.

*The Seventeenth Session (1901)*

This session opened at Calcutta on 26 December and continued for three days. It was attended by 896 delegates—580 from Bengal, 102 from Madras, 89 from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, 51 from Bombay and Sindh, 44 from the Central Provinces, Berar and Secunderabad and 30 from the Punjab. This was the first occasion when a song 'Hindustan' composed by Sarola Devi Ghosal was sung. Maharaja Bahadur Jagadindranath Roy delivered the welcome address. After this, W.C. Bonnerjee proposed the name of D.E. Wacha, known as 'the life and soul of the movement' for the post of the President and it was seconded by P. Anand Charlu. He chaired this session.

**INDIA'S CLAIM FOR LIBERTY AND JUSTICE\***

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the name of the citizens of Calcutta and the people of Bengal, I offer you a most sincere and hearty welcome to our

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\*Address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Calcutta Congress held on 26-28 December, 1901.

city. You can well understand how extremely gratifying it is to the self-love of a person in my position to have the honour and pleasure of taking the initial part of an occasion like the present. The pleasure of offering words of welcome to so many eminent and distinguished men of the different provinces of India, no one who has any love for his fellow-countrymen would willingly forego. And to be the cynosure of all eyes in an assembly like this, even for the space of half an hour, would give rise to feelings of self-importance in the breast of the most modest individual in existence. An occasion like this—always one of satisfaction—is of special satisfaction to me, as though all along the aims and methods of the Congress have had my warmest sympathies, this is the first time I have had the good fortune to be able to take a prominent part in it. If I ever wished, which I do even now, that the task which has been allotted to me had been placed in more capable hands, the reason is that I cannot delude myself into the belief that I am worthy of the honour done to me.

I cannot remain blind to the fact that the gentlemen who on the three previous occasions welcomed you to our city, were men of great distinction and abilities, whose reputation had spread far and wide and whose names were known and respected all over India. Raja Rajendra Lala Mitter, Mr. Monomohan Ghose, and Sir Romesh Chunder Mitter are great names, and rank among the greatest that modern India can boast of. Every one of them had already established their claim to the gratitude of their countrymen by their life, work, and to the admiration of their fellows by their exceptional abilities, when they stood up before you to accord you a welcome in the name of the people of Bengal. It would have been exceedingly strange if, under these circumstances, I did not feel any difference of hesitation in taking the chair today. If I have at last agreed to do so, it is because it has been the one great ambition of my life to join the ranks of those who think, those who feel, and those who work for their country. And whatever misgivings I may have had as regards my ability to discharge in a worthy manner the duty that has been laid upon me, I felt bound to overcome

them in order not to let slip this opportunity of publicly identifying myself with the movement which has my entire sympathy and whole-hearted confidence. If I am poor in experience, I am rich in hopes. If I have done little, I desire to do much. If I have not reached that period of life when men cease to dream dreams, I have not, on the other hand, felt the cold touch of age which freezes the hearts of ordinary mortals. I cannot offer you any advice which would be helpful to you, but I offer you with all my heart and soul what I have—faith in our national cause, and hope of its ultimate victory.

Before I proceed any further, it is due to my immediate predecessor in the chair the late Sir Romesh Chunder Mitter, that we should take this opportunity of publicly recording the great esteem and regard in which he was held by his countrymen. In his lifetime he was perhaps little known to people outside Bengal, except to professional lawyers. But here, in Bengal, he was looked upon with universal admiration and pride. His exceptional abilities are testified to by the fact that he rose to the highest official position under the British Government, which it has ever been the lot of any Indian to reach. He was not only a sound and accomplished lawyer, but also a great and able judge. He had in an uncommonly large degree that fearless independence of character, that scrupulous love of pure justice, that judicial frame of mind undisturbed by any external influence, that dignity of manner and evenness of temper, which we have been taught to believe, go to constitute the greatness of a judge. He was one of those fortunate individuals, only too rare in our community, who enjoyed at the same time the fullest confidence and the highest respect of both the Government and the people. He won the confidence and respect of the Government by the soundness of his judgement and the greatness of his intellectual powers ; the confidence and respect of the people by his steady championship of the cause of liberty and justice. After a most honourable and brilliant career on the bench, he did not retire into the obscurity of private life to enjoy the blessings of a well-learned leisure after the day's work was done ; but sought fresh fields of usefulness and activity in

the province of public life. It was a day of congratulation for us all, when Sir Romesh, in the maturity of manhood, with his noble record of work nobly done, so much to strengthen our movement with the great weight of his name and reputation. It is difficult to fully realize the loss that our cause had suffered by his early death. We only know that by his death the promise of a potent public career has been falsified. We only know that by the sobriety of his judgement, the maturity of his wisdom, the staunchness of his patriotic feeling, he would have been a tower of strength to us. But, alas ; Fate wills that today instead of hearing his voice resound in this hall, we must only mourn his untimely death.

Let me recall another noteworthy fact in the lives of Rajendra Lala, Sir Romesh, and Monomohan Ghose, which is common to them all. Even the most reckless of our critics could not taunt them with having been disappointed place-hunters who, in default of anything, better to do, are supposed to clamour for political reform. Every one of them was an eminently successful man in life, every one of them had by his own exertion and talents acquired wealth, position and fame. They did not belong to that class of leisured plutocracy with whom, in Europe, politics is a sport and a pastime, and, in India, when delicately manipulated, a passport to Birthday honours.

Talking of the conspicuous and famous men who have passed away, we cannot but pay a tribute of honour to the memory of one who, though not of you, was always with you—I mean, the late Mr. Justice Ranade. He was one of the greatest men that modern India has produced—one so great by his intellectual eminence, and by his deep-seated and fair-sighted patriotism that I know of no other man of his age who was in the same rank with him. The problem, the solution of which he made his life's work, is the one paramount problem of modern India, *viz.*, what is the result, and is likely to be, the outcome of the contact of the West with the East, and how best to assimilate the forces of European civilization at work amidst

us, having in view our future national well-being. After Ram Mohan Roy, he was the only one amongst our countrymen who realized the whole problem in all its universality and comprehensiveness. He knew the problem was not only political and economical, but also social and religious. He applied his master-mind to the study of all the present-day problems of our country and there is not a subject he handled which does not bear the indelible mark of his originality of thought, which is not illuminated by the clearness of his vision, and which is not elevated by the purity and fervour of his patriotism. It is for the future to prove whether the solutions he offered us are true or false ; but the greatness of his work cannot be called into question even by those who happen by their temperament and mental constitution to hold opinions different to those of his. He was not one of those Indian thinkers who, by a natural national instinct, retire into the ivory tower of their own thought in order not to be defiled by the contact of ordinary humanity. He, like Ram Mohan Roy, was a friend, philosopher, and guide to his fellow-mortals in the truest sense of those words. If he had had a little more boldness, a little more fire in his composition—in a word, if he had a more vigorous personality, Ranade would have left as deep an impression on our society as Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, it is my painful duty to allude to another death—a death which is mourned by vast communities inhabiting different parts of the globe and which for us has been an event of deep national sorrow,—I mean, the death of the late Queen of England and Empress of India. There have been women famous in history, who presided over the destinies of nations—the splendour of whose reign, the brilliancy of whose court, and the dazzling excesses of whose lives have fascinated the imagination of men ; and the world loves to call them great. Their virtues were those of men—strength, courage, great intelligence and indomitable will ; and their defects those of women—impulsiveness, impetuosity or character, violent passions, and all the weaknesses that feminine flesh is heir to. But in Victoria, the sovereign, the mother and the wife—all



those noble and sweet qualities of mind and heart, which we associate with the best of her sex—were ever conspicuous. It was the fine and noble instincts of the woman in her that led her to issue the proclamation of 1858—which we, her Indian subjects rightly cherish as our Magna Charta—because it enunciates once for all the broad principles of Humanity, Liberty, and Justice according to which this country is to be governed by England. If Her late Majesty had done nothing else, that single message of hers addressed to us after the sanguinary days of the Mutiny—when we lay completely at the mercy of our conquerors—that message so full of deep sympathy for an alien subject race, so noble and liberal in its spirit, so magnificently just in its policy, would alone have won the eternal gratitude and unflinching loyalty of her Indian subjects. But the proclamation is only the prelude of a reign covering nearly the half of a century, which will ever remain the most unique and momentous period in the history of this country. The close and intimate contact with the more powerful and vigorous races of Europe has been the one dominant factor in the life of the people of the East during the century which has just closed. The irresistible pressure of the forces of modern civilization has been felt in every fibre of its society by every nation in Asia. It has become almost physically impossible for any country of the East to remain in isolation, splendid or obscure, from the life-giving or death-dealing contact of the West. Even the Celestial Empire has been shaken to its foundations by very mundane external forces. With the solitary exception of inaccessible Tibet, every country of Asia has been brought within the sphere of influence of Europe. But whereas in the case of other countries such influence is wholly or mainly political or economical, with us it is also intellectual and moral. It is a matter of deep congratulation for us that Providence has placed our destiny in the hands of a European race who by their actions and their institutions, have raised legitimate hopes of our rising once more in the scale of nations. Victoria's reign has seen the birth of a new civilization in India, and has awakened new hopes and new aspirations in our minds, of which, in fact, the National Congress is the product and the

embodiment. Future generations will always look back upon our age as one illumined by the dawn of a larger hope, and quick with the touch of a new spirit. And this age, so unique and so important in the history of our race and our country, will be known to all posterity as the Victorian age of India ; and the name of our late sovereign will be for ever indissolubly associated with the destiny of our people.

When Victoria, however, in the fulness of her years was gathered to her fathers, that sorrowful event did not bring despondency to our hearts ; because we could all rejoice in the fact that Her late Majesty's successor to the throne was equally an object of universal love and affection. His Majesty King Edward VII has been before the public eye for the last forty years ; and when as Prince of Wales he visited our country, he won the hearts of his Indian subjects by his charming personality. As sovereign, he, by his words and acts, has already proved his determination to follow in the footsteps of his great mother. His reign, we hope and trust, will be a fitting sequel—nay, a continuation of the glorious reign of Victoria. That hope and that belief are alone sufficient to evoke in us feelings of the truest loyalty.

When we meet our friends after a period of separation, we naturally begin by talking of those who are dead and whom we cannot forget, and lovingly dwell upon their pious memories. But gradually joyful interest in the present gets the better of sad memories of the past. So, permit me, gentlemen, one again to give expression to the deep feelings of joy which we all experience in welcoming you amongst us. Even if the purpose for which we have met is destined to be defeated, even if our efforts to secure larger political rights prove futile, and our representations do not attract the attention of the powers that be—even then these annual national gatherings would continue to perform a very useful function in bringing the people inhabiting the different parts of this vast continent into more intimate contact, in making them better acquainted with one another, and in tightening their existing bonds of union—in a

word, in creating, keeping alive, and fostering a true national sentiment. I know there are men who deny us the right of calling ourselves a nation. According to these superficial observers we can have nothing in common because we talk different dialects, all equally unintelligible to the foreigner, and because the shapes of our turbans are striking in this diversity. But these people do not care to ascertain, and prefer to remain in blissful ignorance of, the fact that in all these various dialects we express much the same sentiments, the same prejudices, the same ideals and ideals of life—that turbans of various shapes and colours cover heads cast more or less in the same mould which produce and develop similar thoughts. Does the want of uniformity in our creeds present a formidable obstacle to our uniting into a nation in the modern sense of the word? I doubt very much whether there exist any two sects of Hindus who are divided by the same wide gulf of doctrinal and ceremonial differences, that separates the Roman Catholic from the Unitarian. Moreover, if our religious opinions do not unite us, they at least do not divide us, as they do in Europe where everybody is anxious for the salvation of everybody else's soul. As for Hindus and Mohammedans, they have lived for hundreds of years side by side, and have had sufficient time to settle their differences. Now, Hindus as well as Mohammedans, have all become involved in one common destiny. Since the establishment of the British Government in this country, the common political and economical conditions amidst which we live, move, and have our being, will inevitably bring about a greater solidarity amongst the various communities; and it is the bounden duty of every one of us to hasten the desired result by helping the process of fusion with our conscious efforts.

The most convincing proof of our national kinship has been brought home to us by disease and hunger. It is said that one touch of nature makes the whole world kin. Within the last few years, we, the people of India, have felt not the mere touch, but the painful grip, of not one, but many, natural calamities. Although, in Bengal, we have not had a regular famine, yet the shadow of it has been hovering over our

heads, spreading gloom and consternation over the minds of men. But since you met here last, plague has come amongst us—to stay, we know not, for how long. Because the officers of the Government in whose hands has been placed the management, or if you prefer it, the administration of the plague, have communicated to us the extremely reassuring information that it is as impossible to drive out the plague as to control it ; and we have been asked to take it coolly. Well, we esteem ourselves fortunate in not having been made over to the tender mercies and loving kindnesses of scientific philanthropists. In Calcutta, persons wholly ignorant of the cause, nature, and cure of this terrible epidemic are not permitted in the sacred name of science to indulge in their fads of isolation, segregation, and inoculation. When science fails us, we naturally fall back upon philosophy. We are thankful to the plague authorities for recommending us to cultivate the philosophic temper. We can appreciate this method, because it falls in with our humour. Plague, we have been told, is a problem of Bacteriology, and famine of Meteorology ; and as both these sciences happen unfortunately to be in their infancy, we shall have to wait long before any solution can be found. One thing is certain—their solution is to be sought in the laboratory and the observatory, and not in the cabinet or the council-chamber. And in the meantime, I suppose, we had better follow the good old doctrine of live and let die ! Let us derive all the consolation we can manage to extract from these authoritative pronouncements, and rejoice in the fact that the deep woe which has fallen upon the land has brought our hearts nearer to one another. That common adversity has deepened and intensified the sympathy and love we feel for our fellow-countrymen.

I do not think that it falls within my province, as Chairman of the Reception Committee, to discourse on the political questions which you have met here to discuss. But I am persuaded that our critics deserve a certain share of our attention. We welcome criticism even if it be frankly hostile, provided it do not exceed the bounds of truth and fairplay. We welcome

opposition even if it be unreasonable, provided it be not overpowering in its strength. Nothing worth doing in this world can be done by following the line of least resistance. Opposition is doubly useful to us, because, on the one hand, it strengthens the nerves and brings out the sinews of the strong and the capable ; and, on the other hand, it eliminates from our ranks the weak and the irresolute. Our only grievance is that we do not know the case against us. Vague accusations cannot be met. We have been told over and over again that it is a ridiculous presumption on our part to talk of rights—that we do not deserve any. A great English thinker, Walter Pater, has somewhere said that to be sentimental is to have rights : and who can deny the profound wisdom embodied in that one pregnant sentence. Much of the current criticism is of this dogmatic type, expressed in more or less unrestrained language. Whilst invectives have become the monopoly of irresponsible journalists, responsible officers of Government have fallen back upon raillery. A dilettante Viceroy once entertained a convivial gathering of Caledonians in this city with a satirical dissertation on our humble selves. Since Lord Dufferin's days it has become fashionable in high official circles to pelt us with epithets. Occasional sneers are all that we are honoured with, here accompanied with a grin, there with a frown. A high official has been pleased to describe this assemblage as a Christmas pantomime. Well, the Congress may congratulate itself in having served at least one useful purpose in calling back to the mind of at least one big boss of Anglo-India the early and fond associations of Drury Lane and its neighbourhood.

That officials whose ideas and methods we have failed to appreciate, should now and again give vent to uncharitable feelings towards us is only too natural. The mischief is that the attitude of an individual is apt to be misunderstood by some of our countrymen as representing the attitude of the Government. In fact, it deprives us of the open and active cooperation of a certain number of individuals—mostly recipients of, and aspirants to, mere titles—whose aloofness is

freely construed in ignorant and adverse quarters as due to apathy and antipathy to our movement. So far as the majority of our men of rank and wealth are concerned, it would be ungracious and ungrateful on our part not to unhesitatingly admit that had it not been for their sympathy and generous help, this organization would have died of inanition. We all know what a stalwart friend and munificent benefactor we have lost by the death of the late Maharaja of Durbhanga the premier nobleman of Bengal. But those whose fidelity to officialdom must, like the chastity of Caesar's wife, be above suspicion, feel bound to refrain from taking part in, or showing open sympathy with, a political organization which is supposed to have incurred official disfavour. And those whose interest it is to throw discredit on the Congress are not slow to make much of this supposed antipathy of a supposed influential class. The pity of it all is that the titled men of this country, by reason of being often told so, may eventually delude themselves into the belief that they form a separate class—a class having some pretensions to calling itself an aristocracy. It is an obvious fact that the old hereditary aristocracy of the land is dying out, and no new one is likely to be formed which can take its place. Titles are now-a-days mere personal distinctions conferred on all sorts and conditions of men belonging to all ranks and strata of society. It is not reasonable to expect that a fortuitous concourse of atoms can ever result in a living organic body.

Before I resume my seat, I have much pleasure in announcing that this year we have opened an Industrial Exhibition in connection with the Congress, which, I hope, will in future be a permanent feature of our annual meeting. We cannot live in ignorance of the supreme importance which industry has assumed in modern civilization. In these days every political question is at bottom an economic one. It seems that henceforward markets are to be the battle-fields where destinies of nations will be decided. With the average European, it is a fixed idea that in the pre-established harmony of the Universe, Europe is to sell and Asia to buy. But we cannot help feeling

that our thoughts and energies cannot be better employed than in the work of effecting a revival and development of our industries. The exhibition that we have got up cannot fail to be useful in that it will keep the industrial problem before our eyes ; and the poverty of the show will impress us with the "little done and the vast undone".

Ladies and Gentlemen, I will detain you no longer. After the lavish hospitality to which we have been accustomed when guests in other provinces, what we have to offer seems poor, indeed. The systematic kindness, however, with which our little efforts have been appreciated on previous occasions, encourages us to hope that once more the sincerity of our welcome will make up for the deficiencies of our arrangements.

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In this session 21 resolutions were passed. Part (a) of Resolution I expressed deep sorrow at the death of Her Majesty Queen-Empress Victoria ; its Part (b) tendered respectful homage to His Gracious Majesty, King Edward VII and under His Majesty's beneficent reign hopefully looked forward to the strengthening of free institutions, the expansion of popular rights, and the gradual but complete redemption of the promises contained in Her Majesty's Proclamation of 1858 ; Part (c) of the resolution condoled the death of Justice M G. Ranade. Resolution II said about the setting up of Committee in London acting in concert with it and to publish a weekly journal *India* so as to propagate its views. Resolution III said about the malady of poverty and its eradication. Resolution IV repeated the demand of the Congress for the separation of executive and judiciary. Resolution V demanded that the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council should be strengthened in respect of appeals from India and ventured to suggest that eminent lawyers of India be appointed as its Lord Justices. Resolution VI expressed sympathy for the cause of Indian settlers in South Africa. Resolution VII repeated the demand of the Congress for the Indianisation of public services. Resolution VIII reiterated the demand of the Congress for the

eradication of the famines. Resolution IX regretted that the results of the labours of the Public Service Commission had not been fruitful. Resolution X said that the expenses of the maintenance of the British troops should be borne by the British exchequer so as to reduce the burden on the Indian exchequer.

Resolution XI reiterated the demand of the Congress for the establishment of Military Colleges in India. Resolution XII demanded setting up of an Education Commission having Indian members in it in sufficient number. Resolution XIII demanded better payment of wages for the coolies in Assam. Resolution XIV demanded better conditions of military services in India. Resolution XV demanded measures for the improvement of agriculture in the country. Resolution XVI drew the attention of the Government towards need for the solution of economic problems of the country. Resolution XVII registered the protest of the Congress against the currency legislation of 1893. Resolution XVIII demanded the establishment of a Mining College in India. Resolution XIX was in the nature of an omnibus document reiterating demands of the Congress for the raising of the income tax limit from 500 to 1,000 rupees, discontinuance of the grant of exchange compensation allowance to non-domiciled European and Eurasian employees, suitable modification of the provisions of the Arms Act, establishment of a High Court of Judicature for the Punjab, improvement of technical education in the country etc. Resolution XX said about the reappointment of Hume as the Secretary and of Wacha as the Joint-Secretary for the ensuing year. Finally, Resolution XXI said about the holding of next session in the Bombay Presidency after Christmas on a date and place to be decided later.

### *The Eighteenth Session (1902)*

This session took place at Ahmedabad, in the Bombay Presidency, on 23, 24, and 26 December, 1902. It began its work on an earlier date than ever before, in consequence of the



Coronation Durbar of the King-Emperor Edward VII, to be held in the imperial city of Delhi on the new year's day in 1903. It was attended by 471 delegates—418 from Bombay and Sindh, 20 from Bengal, 16 from the C.P., Berar and Secunderabad, 12 from Madras and 5 from the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (formerly N.W. P and Oudh). The welcome address was delivered by Ambalal S. Desai. Thereafter, Pherozeshah M. Mehta proposed and Sankaran Nair seconded the name of Surendranath Banerjea for the presidentship and then he took the chair in the midst of loud applause.

### **LOYALTY BASED ON AN INTELLIGENT APPRECIATION OF NATIONAL INTEREST\***

Brother-Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The gentlemen who have organized the arrangements for the 18th Indian National Congress have conferred upon me the inestimable honour of according to you a warm and hearty welcome to this historic city, the Capital of Gujarat. I consider this as one of the proudest privileges of my life. It is one to which the sons and successors of the recipients may always point with peculiar satisfaction. On behalf of the Reception Committee, and of the people of Gujarat and of Bombay, I offer you all a most hearty welcome. I dare say many of you have had the pleasure of having attended the previous Congresses, which were held either in the Presidency towns, or in towns which are at one time of the year or another the seat of a local Government. Our humble town may fairly claim the honour of being the first Zillah town in the whole of India that has spontaneously undertaken the duty of inviting this grand national assembly.

Though we are sensible of the distinction, it is not without misgivings that we have entered upon the performance of this patriotic duty. You are no doubt aware that we have passed

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\*Address delivered by Ambalal Sakarlal Desai, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Ahmedabad Congress held on 23-20 December, 1902.

through one of the most disastrous famines of the country and that the two years that followed the famine, have been years of great agricultural distress and commercial depression. Plague has been long raging in Bombay, Gujarat and the Deccan. It seemed doubtful whether under such circumstances, we could command the funds needed for the satisfactory discharge of our obligations. Moreover, Gujarat has long been known to be a peace-loving and industrial province ; and we were not sure of enlisting for the active service of the Congress sufficient number of young, energetic and public spirited men to organize and carry to the finish all the preliminary arrangements which are essential to success.

The temper and attitude of the Government officials was to us an unknown factor, and from the experience of other places it was deemed proper to pay due regard to this aspect of the matter. We are happy to say that all our misgivings have proved almost groundless. In spite of crippled resources and bad times, subscriptions began to pour in liberally as soon as the work was begun, and to our surprise we discovered among our educated men a degree of earnestness, public spirit, and devotion to the cause of the nation, which might have otherwise long remained latent. The temper and attitude of the officials, we are thankful to say, has been all that could be desired. They have observed towards the Congress work generally an attitude of benevolent neutrality and towards one section of our operations, *viz.*, the Industrial Exhibition, they have shown a spirit of positive friendliness.

Mr. F.S.P. Lely, the esteemed Commissioner of our Division, is one of its earliest supporters, and recently H.E. Lord Northcote, the Governor of Bombay, has kindly consented to be a patron. While all these circumstances have proved unexpectedly favourable, there are others inseparable from the area, position and character of our town which have presented difficulties not easily to be overcome. In spite of our best efforts to do everything in our power to provide for your accommodation and comfort, gentlemen, we are still appre-

hensive that we have not fully succeeded in making arrangements agreeable to the dignity and to the views and standards of our honoured guests—the delegates who hail from all parts of the country. For the shortcomings which we fear still exist we beseech your kind indulgence. Please accept our assurance that in the desire to serve you well and honourably, we yield to no other centre that has welcomed you in the past, or may invite you in the future. In writing to friends we Gujaratis often use a saying "accept our little performance as a complete one". I humbly commend it to you for its sympathetic application to our case as a token of your kind-heartedness.

Gujarat and its people have long been well known for their patient and industrious habits and for their strong partiality for commercial pursuits. Nowhere perhaps throughout the whole country have the advantages of the abiding peace established by the strong arm of the British Government, and of the numerous other solid benefits conferred upon the people by the British rule more highly valued, or more vividly realized than by the peace-loving and trading population of Gujarat ; and nowhere I may venture to say has the feeling of loyalty to the British Government been stronger than in this, once a favoured and flourishing land. For a long time we were content to devote our energies exclusively to agriculture, trade and commerce. Money-making was our principal aim, and we quietly bore the deserved reproach that Gujarat was dead to the importance of the political movements.

The general progress of the country for the past two generations has produced a change even in the view-point of such a conservative and peaceable community (Hon. Mr. Mehta—"not a bad improvement"). Commercial men even of the old school were shrewd enough to know that it was for their advantage to have the ruling power on their side. The spread of education and enlightenment has gradually extended the range of vision of these as also of the generation that has succeeded them. Commercial Gujarat has begun to perceive that all the world over there is now raging a fierce trade

competition and that in this struggle each of the leading nations of the Western world is naturally using all the political power at its command for the advancement of its own benefit, and high protective barriers are raised by a majority of them for the exclusion of foreign products. This has been an object lesson to the commercial classes. Internally the Currency Legislation of the Government of India, whatever its financial justification, has brought home to many an important trader and agriculturist the stern fact that very fertile sources of economic gain may be suddenly dried up or ruinously affected by a single political act of the State on its strictly financial side.

The huge annual drain of 30 crores of rupees which the present administrative arrangements of the British Government render necessary has to be made good by taxes supplied by the trade and industry of the country. The influx of foreign goods has been largely responsible for the annihilation of the indigenous industries of this province and this circumstance has contributed in no small degree to a vivid knowledge that trade is largely influenced by political conditions. You are perhaps aware, gentlemen, that the people of Gujarat emigrate in considerable numbers to Cape Colony, Natal, Transvaal and other portions of South Africa as labourers, artisans, traders and capitalists. The flagrantly unjust treatment they receive from the white settlers there, who are British subjects, is reported by the emigrants to their kinsmen here and a strong belief is gaining ground in the community that in their jealousy the white Britishers desire to take an undue advantage of their political position over us though we are fellow-subjects and the conviction is forced upon us that to secure an equality of trading opportunities for all British subjects political agitation on sound and loyal basis is indispensable.

You must have been struck, gentlemen, the number of tall chimneys on either side of the Railway line as your train approached this town. These are our Spinning and Weaving Mills of which we are justly proud. Now every one of our

cloth Mills has to pay the obnoxious excise duty imposed by the Government of India. As the shares of these Mills are held mostly by the people of the town, the iniquity of the duty is felt in almost every home ; and this too has led us to understand that commercial pursuits to the total exclusion of political action are under the modern conditions of life highly suicidal. We have, gentlemen, as you are aware, passed through the greatest famine of the century and have lost nearly twenty-five lacs out of our population of less than crore. Train-loads of grain came every day and yet men died like flies ; on the road-side all over the land and this in spite of the admirable arrangements made by the Government and by private citizens for the saving of life ; in spite, gentlemen, of the huge funds expended by private and public charity, and of generous subscriptions sent by yourselves and all our well-wishers. These poor men died of sheer starvation, not because there was no grain to be had, but because they had no money to buy it with. They were mostly villagers, whose huts now lie desolate. These sad sights forced upon us, peace-loving and commercial men as we are, the inquiry—how is it our kinsmen are so poor ? Various answers have been suggested.

This is not the place to discriminate and decide which are correct. Our agriculturists had long been crying out that at each so-called revision of the land assessment by Government a great enhancement was made ; that the system of revenue collections was most inelastic, and that the tillers of the soil were getting poorer and running into debt. Intelligent Indians who had travelled our Northern and Eastern India observed that in Gujarat, land is very heavily taxed. The late Mr. Javerilal Yajnik, one of our most honoured names, incessantly brought the oppressive nature of the land-tax in Gujarat to the notice of the public. All this was of no avail. Then the Famine Commission of Sir Antony MacDonnell deliberately made the statement that in Gujarat "the assessment was a full one" an euphemistic way of confirming the popular view that it is oppressive.

The famine, therefore, has opened our eyes to the importance of keeping the land question perpetually before the public till it is satisfactorily settled. In the matter of collecting the land-tax here, the system is unduly rigorous. The village people have long felt this but their complaints for long failed to reach the authorities or were unheeded. During the famine the Revenue authorities would not suspend the collections until after individual inquiries regarding the means of each cultivator had been made. Public men pointed out to Government in the press and on the public platform the impracticability of individual inquiries and the mischief resulting from the Government policy. But the revenue authorities turned a deaf ear. A considerable amount of oppression was practised for the collection of revenue and the conduct of certain officials of Broach had to be made the subject of an official inquiry, which proved that in the collection of revenue the village servants there had resorted to very illegal and discreditable methods. This too led to no apparent change in the attitude of the Government.

At last came the Famine Commission and they strongly disapproved of the policy of making inquiry as to individual means before granting a suspension of the land-tax in times of famine, as both impolitic and impracticable. Yet the Bombay Government made no change. It was announced quite recently that they had perceived the error of their ways and that individual inquiry during famine times will be abandoned. Now, gentlemen, this is the last of the events which has persuaded us that a policy of political aloofness and indifference prolongs our grievances and the combined and concerted action for the sake of the great agricultural section of our community is as necessary as for any other.

Such are the considerations that have influenced and will continue to influence the practical trading people of this Province and day by day draw them nearer and nearer to the work which this great assembly has set before it. To men of light and leading who can study the drift of contemporary events

and extended their ken to distant goals, the National Congress movement is the centre towards which their aims and aspirations converge, the work to which they may subordinate all their personal aims, and dedicate all their physical and moral energy and the whole of the material and spiritual resources which they can command. The days are gone by when it was the custom of a section of the Anglo-Indian Press to revile the Congress as a seditious and disloyal organization. It was the language very often of ignorant and prejudiced people who refused to see things in their true light and correct proportions. Those Anglo-Indians who have always looked upon the Indian services as a preserve for their boys, joined in the abuse from selfish motives and unable to gauge the changes brought about by the progressive course of more than a generation were naturally alarmed and scented danger in the operations of the Congress. The storm of abuse for some time grew in volume and force. It eventually struck against the firm rock of loyalty to the British throne on which our foundations are laid, and spent itself.

Our aims and motives have been vindicated by the consistent course of action, during the last seventeen years by the moderation and sobriety of our methods, and by the assistance of honourable Englishmen who have from the first been our most trusted friends and guides. Naturally enough we agitate for a simultaneous reform of the administration in various directions and for a change even in the system of Government ; but the basal idea that underlies and runs through all our actions, the idea which is as it were one of the axioms and postulates of our political geometry is that it is for our benefit that the British power should continue to be supreme in our land. This is the foundation-stone of our edifice on which the whole superstructure of our actions and methods rests. Loyalty to the British Government, gentlemen, is the dominant sentiment of every Congressman.

Ours is a loyalty based on an intelligent appreciation of our own vital and permanent interests. It is a reasoned sentiment and not a mere blind attachment. This being our inmost feeling

we can afford to tolerate, or to pass over in silent contempt the feeble cry of those who even after seventeen years of actual experience still persist in misrepresenting our aims and aspirations. It is because we are keenly anxious for the permanence of the British rule in India that we desire that the relations between England and India should be regulated by equitable principles mutually beneficial in all respects and especially so in financial matters.

Taking our stand on such principles we earnestly desire that the British policy towards us Indians should be one of trust, not of limited trust or distrust. We maintain, gentlemen, and think it our duty to urge incessantly upon the British Government that the full benefits of the British rule cannot accrue to the Indian nation, unless and until Indians, are more largely associated in the work of Government. We place before them the truism that just as there are two sides to every question, there is an Indian view of every administrative measure, and that it is necessary in the interest of both sides that this view must be adequately represented to the governing people, and sympathetically and patiently considered by them.

The burden of performing this patriotic duty lies on the natural leaders and representatives of the people, upon you gentlemen, who represent the masses. It is for us to place Indian questions before the authorities at our annual meeting and to ventilate them throughout the year. There were days when the whole population was ignorant of the principles of the British rule and the western methods of government and then the entire burden of the administration developed upon the official hierarchy. The spread of education and liberal ideas has vastly changed the conditions of Indian society. Officials have no longer the monopoly of knowledge and wisdom that they once possessed. A system of government founded a hundred years ago has ceased to be suitable to our altered state. We naturally wish that the methods of government should be altered to suit the changed surroundings. The



particular resolutions that have been passed by the previous Congresses are simply the corollaries and practical applications of the foregoing principles. As a step towards a policy of greater trust in the Indian people, we pray that the stringency of the Arms Act may be relaxed with discriminative leniency ; that the higher posts in the military service of the country should be opened to qualified Indians ; and that the question of Indian volunteering may be favourably considered.

It is on the same ground that we base our demand for holding examinations in India for the Indian Civil Services and for the medical and other services. We wish that the principle of associating the people in the administration may be further applied by extending the legislative councils, and widening the elective basis in local and Municipal boards ; and also by an extension of the jury system. The combination of the duties of the tax Collector and the Judge in the same hands has outlived its necessity and now causes miscarriages of justice and stands in the way of further progress. We think it our duty to represent that the expenditure on Military establishments may be reduced, and that larger sums should be devoted to the spread of education of every description, primary, secondary and industrial. As a measure of financial justice we pray that the cost of the British troops stationed in India or a considerable portion of them should be borne by the Imperial Exchequer, and that India should be relieved of them. Of course, every question may be argued on more grounds than one, and most of the subjects to which we draw attention of the Government may be pressed on the sole ground of financial equity.

Such, gentlemen, are the principles and propositions which determine the attitude and guide the conduct of every educated Indian towards this grand national movement. They will be the principles of every Indian devoted to his creed and his country. Our programme is a large one and it embraces a variety of subjects, and it is certain that with the progress of our community, it may grow larger and larger. Those among

us who expect its speedy fulfilment are, I fear, doomed to suffer grave disappointment. They have not read English history carefully or with advantage. By the very essence of our compact we have bound ourselves to proceed upon constitutional lines, and adopt lawful methods of procedure. The changes that we seek or may hereafter resolve upon, can only be brought about by the British people. It so happens that the great mass of the British people are very ignorant about India and Indian matters and the average member of Parliament does not concern himself about us.

We have therefore to educate the English elector and bring him to see and acknowledge the justice and expediency of our demands. This is no light or short work. The proper fulfilment of it will demand from us a sustained public spirit, a heavy sacrifice of time and money, and beyond these a spirit of combination for common ends to which as yet we are being gradually trained. It will require, gentlemen, patience and perseverance for a number of years, perhaps for more than one generation. More than that, we shall have to continue, even in circumstances of provocation, in that course of moderation and sobriety which have been our conspicuous characteristics from the commencement. I anticipate that it will be a long and arduous struggle along rugged and thorny paths that we must prepare ourselves to engage in. It will put a severe strain on our patriotism, on our devotion to our cause, on our loyalty and our spirit of self-sacrifice and in short the moral and spiritual fibre of each of us. There will be times perhaps when our prospects will look dismal and gloomy, and when timid prudence may suggest to us to desist from our course. As one of the shady side of life I cannot hope to witness the fruits of these patriotic labours.

It may not be perhaps the good fortune of many much younger people who are present here to see that bright and auspicious day. But, gentlemen, I am a confirmed optimist. If there is one thing of which I feel most confident, nay sanguine, it is this *viz*, that success, complete success, is certainly to be

our reward. It is my faith, gentlemen, in our genuine love of our country and devotion to its interests that makes me feel so sanguine. It is the record of solid work of this Congress during the last seventeen years that makes me indulge in such youthful hope. I entertain this sanguine hope because I observe that the great wave of patriotism that has begun to flow in this land is spreading over ever-widening areas and embracing gradually the whole youth of the country. It is the sincere friendship and active assistance of philanthropic Englishmen like Sir W. Wedderburn, Mr. Allan Octavian Hume, Mr. W.S. Caine, Mr. Digby, and several others that makes me take such a cheerful view of the future.

It is the constant accession, gentlemen, of new genuine friends like Sir H. Cotton and Mr. Thorburn from the ranks of distinguished Indian administrators that makes me believe that we are destined to succeed. It is the existence among us of noble patriots like Mr. Dadabhai Naorojii, Mr. R.C. Dutt, Mr. W.C. Bonnerjii and others whom I would fain name, patriots of whom any country may be proud that makes me cling to my fond hopes for the regeneration of this our great and historic country. Further, I have an unbounded trust in the high moral aims, practical sagacity, and enlightened statesmanship of the great British nation to which our destinies have been confided by Providence.

Finally, I have faith in the moral evolution of the world and the eternal laws of right and wrong. No just and true cause as in the moral history of the world failed of success. My hopes are based on these solid grounds. It will be a bright day when a succeeding generation or perhaps succeeding generations will reap the fruits of what you are at present sowing. That day will rebound to the lasting glory of all who have patiently and moderately but at the same time patriotically worked for the welfare of this country. It will be a memorable day in the annals of the British Empire, and the British Crown will shine the brighter by the increased prosperity of its brightest jewel—the Indian Empire.

In this session 23 resolutions were passed. Resolution I expressed deep sorrow at the death of His Imperial Majesty Edward VII and trusted that His Majesty's Edward V's reign would usher in an era of peace, friendship and contentment throughout the Empire and would be marked by the gradual but complete redemption of the pledges contained in the Royal Proclamation of 1858. Resolution II condoled the death of R.M. Sayani and P. Rangia Naidu. Resolution III reiterated the demand of the Congress for the eradication of poverty. Resolution IV said about the demand of the Congress for the solution of economic problems of the country, particularly relating to the eradication of famines. Resolution V urged redressal of serious grievances of the Indian settlers in South Africa. Resolution VI registered the protest of the Congress against currency legislation of 1893. Resolution VII urged reduction of military expenditures. Resolution VIII appreciated some of the recommendations of the Universities Commission Report. Resolution IX desired that the proposal of setting up Tata Research Institute be given full support by the Congress and the Government of India. Resolution X repeated the demand of the Congress for police reforms.

Resolution XI desired separation of executive and judiciary. Resolution XII said that a better system of appointment of civil judges be adopted so as to maintain higher standards of efficiency in the administration of law by requisitioning the services of trained lawyers. Resolution XIII desired reduction of the salt tax. Resolution XIV repeated the stand of the Congress that the labours of the Public Service Commission had remained without any good results. Resolution XV demanded that Indians should be appointed on all higher jobs in the railways. Resolution XVI demanded repeal of excise duty on the manufactured cotton goods by handloom industry. Resolution XVII demanded better medical services in the country. Resolution XVIII was in the nature of an omnibus document which confirmed the earlier resolutions and also reiterated them now as reconstitution of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, discontinuance of the grant of exchange

compensation allowance to non-domiciled Europeans and Eurasians, suitable modification of the provisions of the Arms Act, establishment of a High Court of Judicature in the Punjab, reorganisation of the Education Services, introduction of the system of trial by jury, better implementation of the forest laws etc. Resolution XX reiterated the stand of the Congress for the creation of a Committee in London entrusted with the task of publishing a weekly journal *India* for propagating its views. Resolution XXI thanked William Wedderburn and other members of the British Congress Committee for their valuable services. Resolution XXII said about the reappointment of Hume as the Secretary and of Wacha as the Joint Secretary of the Congress for the ensuing year. Finally, Resolution XXIII said about the holding of next session at Madras on a date after Christmas.

### *The Nineteenth Session (1903)*

This session took place in the city of Madras. It opened on 28 December and continued for three days. It was attended by 538 delegates—383 from Madras, 76 from Bombay, 47 from Bengal and Assam, 18 from the Central Provinces, Berar, Secunderabad and Hyderabad, 8 from U.P., 5 from the Punjab and 1 from Burma. This was the first occasion when Burma sent one representative and no representative from Sindh attended the session. The welcome address was delivered by Nawab Syed Muhammed who defined politics as 'the science of social happiness'. After that, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta proposed and Eardley Norton seconded the name of Lal Mohan Ghose for presidentship and he occupied the chair in the midst of deafening cheers.

### **UNITY BASED ON RIGHTS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE\***

Fellow Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Reception Committee, I bid you all a most hearty welcome to this city. I feel it a high and proud privilege

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\*Address delivered by Nawab Syed Muhammed, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Madras Congress held on 28-30 December, 1903.

to stand here as the representative of the non-official educated members of the Indian Community in this Presidency and to offer to you our cordial greetings and humble hospitality. In heartily thanking my colleagues on the Reception Committee, for the honour they have done me by selecting me as their spokesman, I feel that the honour is due more especially to the great community to which I belong than to any personal merits to mine.

Gentlemen, it has often been noticed as a drawback to the value of this political institution that the members of the religious fraternity to which I belong, do not show as much zeal to form part of its organization and to partake in its activities such as their position in the Empire must impel them to do. I am not yet competent to speak with authority for all India on this subject, but I venture to say that, so far as this Presidency is concerned, neither the Mohammedan community nor the other communities whose representatives are assembled in this great gathering feel that as citizens of a great Empire, they have any mutually conflicting interests or ambitions. We are not wanting, I believe, in what our distinguished Viceroy has justly pointed out, *viz.*, "The first essential to the orderly rule of a community of one race and religion, and still more of a community of many divergent races and religions, by a governing class of another origin and faith, is the recognition by both parties of that fellow-feeling which substitutes mutual respect for distrust, cooperation for antagonism, and kindness for social indifference". The happy harmony which exists among all these communities is, without doubt, the glorious outcome of British Rule, and in all the efforts which are made to make British sovereignty more stable, and more conducive to the happiness and contentment of the people it is the duty of every self-respecting man to take his share.

In the brilliant speech delivered by Mr. Justice Budruddin Tyabji, as the President of the Congress in the City in 1887, he said, "I do not consider that there is anything whatever in the position of the different communities of India, be they Hindus,

Musalman, Parsee, or Christian, which should induce the leaders of any one community to stand aloof from the others in their efforts to obtain those great general reforms, those great general rights, which are for the common benefit of us all, and which I feel assured have only to be earnestly and unanimously pressed upon the Government to be granted to us." Those wise words of our eminent countrymen ought to be laid to heart, by all stragglers belonging to whatever creed, from the path of political and social advancement in this country and it is hardly necessary for me to add that no great races inhabiting this vast continent, the Mohammedans and the Hindus, cooperate and work together in harmony for the common benefit. I can assure you that so far as the Presidency is concerned the relations of the two classes of the population is as harmonious as could be desired and it is duty of every patriotic citizen to remember always the saying "United we stand ; divided we fall".

There is an idea current in some minds, not alone among the ignorant and uneducated, but among some educated men that political agitation is much to be deprecated and avoided. Such persons do not grasp the principle that politics is the science of social happiness, and that it is the duty of every citizen to cultivate the habit of taking a watchful interest in the transaction of the national affairs by the authorities concerned. They do not also perceive that it depends upon what you agitate for, and how you agitate, as to whether an agitator is to be condemned, or praised, and as an acute writer puts it, just-minded agitation prevents the putrefaction of opinion which is as fatal to states as to truth. The poet Cowper says :

"Winds from all quarters agitate the air,  
and fit the limpid element for use".

Every educated man, and the man of leisure and opportunity, feels that he owes a duty to his less favoured fellowmen, to learn their wants, and the means of remedying them, and he owes a duty to the Government under which he lives, to interpret the same correctly and to advise upon the best course to

adopt under the circumstances. In the discharge of this double duty, neither the frowns of the authorities, nor the other difficulties that may beset his path, ought to deter him. One of the greatest of living English statesmen says, "The salt of English character springs from the double circumstance of every man being at liberty to have, and being inclined to take the trouble to have an opinion about the method and doings of his Government, and of so many men being called upon in high capacity or low, in an important function or an obscure one, to take an independent and free share in controlling or initiating the doings of their Government".

In the efforts, then, which we make for holding the mirror up to the Government, in regard to the wants, and the conditions of the people of this country, we are simply striving to walk in conformity with the lessons taught by the British nation. To my fellow countrymen of all creeds, and classes, I beg leave to commend the following words of Cardinal Newman, viz., "We are not born for ourselves, but for our kind, our neighbours, for our country—it is but selfishness, indolence, a perverse fastidiousness, an unmanliness, and no virtue or praise, to bury our talent in a napkin". I must at the same time observe, that it is unfortunate that the officers of Government do not always receive in the right spirit, free and honest expression of opinion on public questions and view with ill-concealed dislike, and adverse criticism of the acts, measures and opinion of Government though I am bound to admit that the relations between the Government and the people in this Presidency are more cordial than appears to be the case elsewhere. Impatience at, nay intolerance of, unfavourable comment, seems generally to breed in the atmosphere of Indian official life. Criticism which is unpalatable to the Government, runs the risk of being entirely disregarded, but Government are prepared to accept those criticisms which are in harmony with their own declared opinion. It is therefore gratifying to see the Viceroy stating, in speaking of educational reforms, that "The state is the aggregate of its own citizens, and not a mere governing organization, and in the latter capacity cannot dis-



charge its educational responsibility, without the cardinal co-operation of the community at large". This is an age of feverish activity and of momentous changes in all departments of life, of life in the individual as well as in the nation. That the Government is very fully alive to the difficulties and responsibilities with which they are confronted in the administration of this vast country and honestly strive to overcome them, may be taken to be an axiomatic truth. But the methods with which they pilot the boat at the present day, seem to us to be old-fashioned and clumsy, and the administration can sooner be steered into calm waters, if they take the people more into their confidence. In an elaborate justification regarding the large number of Commissions which have been formed under the present administration, His Excellency the Viceroy, in his budget speech last year, referred to the fact that the Executive authorities in this country is out of touch with a constituency so scattered and so huge as this is, and pointing to the necessity for building bridges between the Government and the people, maintained that the Commissions appointed in his regime were intended to fulfil that purpose. There are, however Commissions and Commissions, and as His Excellency himself in his masterly way put it, they may be of two categories, Commissions to shelve and Commissions to solve, problems in Indian administration. I would venture to affirm that the reports and recommendations of the Universities Commission do worse than shelve the highly important question with which they deal. Those recommendations, if adopted, would in the opinion of competent authorities, inaugurate a scheme of educational policy in this country destructive of the best interests of the nation.

The report and recommendations of the Police Commission on the other hand, are, I have every reason to believe, conceived in a sympathetic and catholic spirit and with a clear insight into the needs, capacities, and aspirations of the people of the country. Be this as it may, I think that the system of administering the country by means of these Commissions which are costly contrivances intended to serve as bridges between the

Government and the people, ought to give place to a system of admitting the natural leaders of the people and men of capacity and character in the country to a larger and juster share in the councils of the Empire, so as to bring to bear the living forces of society upon the administrative machine. There is absolutely no ground for saying that men of the requisite calibre for such responsible functions are not to be found in the ranks of the educated classes in this country. It is little more than two weeks since we have had to mourn the loss of Dewan Bahadur Srinivasa Raghava Aiyangar, who at the age of 54 was cut off in the midst of a career of conspicuous service and achievement. He was a man of brilliant talents, and of wide culture, possessing an extensive range of information and exact knowledge on a large variety of subjects, and imbued with a lofty ideal of public and private duty. His services have been appreciated in the highest terms by the Government both during his life-time and since his death. Sir Andrew Fraser, the present Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who came into daily contact for a period of eight months with Mr. Srinivasa Aiyangar in his capacity as member of the Police Commission, said of him that "His assistance was most valuable to us. He never on any occasion did or said anything that could have been regarded as inconsistent with his high character as a gentleman and as a statesman. He loved his people and maintained what he believed to be their cause with chivalry and firmness".

Is it not a matter of deep significance with regard to the professed recognition by the Government of the claims of Indians to administrative offices suitable to their capacity, without distinction of colour, race or creed that this gentleman of remarkable abilities, and character, was not given an appointment in the British service higher than that of being the head of the Registration Department and had to go to Baroda as Dewan to find a fitting sphere for the exercise of his great abilities and experience, and was on the eve of being drafted to be at the helm of another Native State, when he was struck down by a mortal illness? Another distinguished countryman of ours, Sir A. Seshiah Sastri, who was also

recently left the land of the living, belonged to an older generation and died full of years and honours and won laurels as an eminent administrator when he successively occupied the posts of Dewan of Travancore and of Pudukota. The highest appointment which he held in the British service was the Sheristadarship of the Board of Revenue. So long ago as 1886, Sir William Hunter said, "We know by experience that we could not have made a workable land law for Bengal, without the help of a Native Member of Council. Notwithstanding Babu Peary Mohan Mukerji's general opposition, his knowledge of the land system was of the greatest value to us. Yet while Native judges have been admitted to all the High Courts, these races have hitherto been excluded from all the Boards of Revenue".

Sir M.E. Grant Duff who, as Governor of Madras, did not establish a high reputation for a liberal and systematic treatment of the Indians, said that "The main object of the Indian Government must be to get for the country the best possible administration at the cheapest rate. To that object all minor considerations such as those of race and colour, must be subordinated". Upon the principle of economical administration, of giving just recognition to the claims of the children of the soil, and of utilizing the best means available for probing the social evils, and of finding out the true remedies for their removal, the appointment of Indians to high administrative offices is a matter of paramount obligation on the Ruling power, which has been recognized in solemn form in the gracious proclamation issued by Her late Majesty the Queen-Empress.

In practice, however, we find that the candid declaration of that Viceroy, is only too true, who said that Englishmen in India have taken every means in their power of breaking to the heart the words of promise uttered to the ear of the people of this country by that proclamation.

The gradual emancipation of the people from their present state of intellectual and political thralldom, in this country is.

also a matter deserving the deepest consideration of the Government, for as a writer on Politics and Economics points out, "No man can escape from the influence of his surroundings. The history of the nation in which he lives, and the institutions under which he is born, do an immense deal to mould his character. We are always talking about the influence of education, but nowhere can it be so clearly seen as in the influence of political institutions in forming character and opinion. This is constantly noted in the present day by those who demand the extension of the franchise as an instrument of education, or by others who tell how the active participation in political life in the colonies affect the mutual habits of the British labourers who settle there".

The first English statesman in India who laid the foundation for a form of popular representative Government, and who emphasized its value as an essential factor of political education to the people, was the Marquis of Ripon, whose famous minute on local Self-Government is a masterpiece of sound political wisdom and foresight. The edifice which he built has not, to my thinking, been added to at all, or improved by his successors, but there have been attempts now and again, to shift the foundations upon which it was reared.

As a result of the kaleidoscopic arrangement and the shifting agencies by which the system of administration in this country is carried on, there is no security for any set of principles being acted upon for any length of time so as to lead to a continuous stream of national activity and progress. We must build our hopes for national regeneration upon the fact that the Government will sooner or later, see the wisdom of pursuing a steady and enlightened policy, the policy of ceasing to make leaps into the unknown in the matter of legislation, and administration and of appreciating the value of Sir William Hunter's words, *viz.*, "British rule can be stable only if it rests upon the goodwill and is supported by the cooperation of the people. My fundamental idea is a united India, but one no longer united by force, but by the gradual recognition of the rights and aspirations of the people".

Gentlemen, only one point more, I desire to press for your consideration. It was pointed out not long ago in the columns of a leading Indian newspaper in this city that it is an extraordinary circumstance that in Calcutta, statues for every Viceroy have been erected excepting for the Marquis of Ripon and that in order to redeem and restore the national trait for gratitude, steps should be taken at the time of the assembling of this Congress to have the memorial set up. Having been recently to Calcutta which may be described as a city not only of palaces but also of statues, I am in a position to feel the force of those observations and I do hope that by the united efforts of all the gentlemen who are present here, we shall succeed in wiping off this long standing stigma on the national reputation. The Marquis of Ripon himself whose name is enshrined already in the heart of every true Indian, is determined that his name shall ever stand green and fresh in the memory of the people of this country as the noble champion of their cause. When the proposal was recently made in England to make this country pay for the cost of the British troops to be stationed in South Africa, no Englishman raised his voice in more indignant protest against the utter unrighteousness of it, than did the noble Marquis in the House of Lords. As long as the British nation can send representatives of the type of Lord Ripon, A.O. Hume, Sir William Wedderburn, Sir Henry Cotton and Sir Henry Stokes to administer this country, we have no reason to be otherwise than hopeful of the future and the flame of loyalty to the British throne will ever burn brightly in the hearts of all true Indians.

Once more I beg heartily to welcome you to this city and request you to proceed to elect your President.

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In this session 16 resolutions were passed. Resolution I expressed grief at the death of Lord Stanley of Alderley, W.S. Caine and the Raja of Ramnad. Resolution II repeated the regret that the labours of Public Service Commission had remained devoid of any good result. It desired a check on brain drain of the Indian people. Resolution III viewed with

alarm the tendency to increase the land revenue assessment in view of the poverty of the agricultural population of the country. Resolution IV drew the attention of the Government towards hard condition of the Indian living in British Colonies like Australia and South Africa. Resolution V sought reform in the administration of the Indian universities. Resolution VI registered the protest of the Congress against changes in the Official Secrets Act. Resolution VII reiterated the demand of the Congress for reduction of military expenditure and demanded better military services. Resolution VIII thanked the Government of India for reducing duty on salt and increasing the assessable limit of income tax. Resolution IX had an importance of its own that registered the protest of the Congress against territorial divisions of the country in an arbitrary manner. It said: "That the Congress views with deep concern the present policy of the Government of India in breaking up territorial divisions which have been of long standing and are closely united by ethnological, legislative, social and administrative relations, and deprecates the separation from Bengal of Dacca, Mymensingh, Chittagong Divisions and portions of Chhota Nagpur Division, and also the separation of the District of Ganjam and the agency tracts of the Ganjam and Vizagapatnam Districts from the Madras Presidency."

Resolution X contained protest of the Congress against Madras Municipal Bill whose provisions were in violation of the assurances given by Lord Ripon. Resolution XI appealed to the British voters to support and elect leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, W.C. Bonnerjee, Sir Henry Cotton and John Jardine. Resolution XII thanked the Government of India for the introduction of the Credit Cooperative Societies Bill in the Viceroy's Legislative Council. Resolution XIII was in the nature of an omnibus document. It desired separation of executive and judiciary, simultaneous holding of the Indian Civil Service Examination in India and England, and an enquiry into the economic conditions of India. Resolution XIV thanked Sir William Wedderburn and other members of the

British Committee of the Congress for their valuable services. Resolution XV specified reappointment of Hume as the Secretary and of Wacha as the Joint General Secretary and of G.K. Gokhale as the Additional Joint General Secretary of the Congress for the ensuing year. Finally, Resolution XVI said about the next session to be held after Christmas in 1904 as may be later determined at Bombay.

### *The Twentieth Session (1904)*

This session marked the close of the second decade of the life of this powerful national organisation. It opened at Bombay on 26 December and sat for three days. It was attended by 1,010 delegates—618 from the Bombay Presidency, 104 from Madras, 104 from the C.P., Berar, Secunderabad and Hyderabad, 102 from Bengal and Assam, 54 from the U.P. and 28 from the Punjab. Such a big gathering had never been before and the reason for this was the growing anxiety caused by the repressive and reactionary policy of Viceroy Curzon. The session took place 'under the gloom created by Lord Curzon's policy\*. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta delivered the welcome address. After that, Surendranath Banerjea proposed and C. Sankaran Nair seconded the name of Sir Henry Cotton for the post of the President. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya also supported the proposal and then Sir Henry Cotton took the chair in the midst of loud applause. This was the fourth occasion when such a great honour was conferred on an Englishman.

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\*Annie Besant: *How India Wrought for Freedom*, p. 393. The author of the official report of the Congress for this session noted that "there had grown up a feeling of deep resentment...when a series of repressive measures—both legislative and administrative—were forced by him on the country in the teeth of the fiercest opposition from the public. Long before the Congress of last year met, it had come to be very generally recognised that whatever may be said in favour of Lord Curzon's administration, the educated classes of the country, at any rate, had in him no friend, and that their aspirations would receive at his hands not merely could neglect, but actual repression...The situation made the Congress of 1904 one of unusual importance." *Ibid.*

**STEADFAST LOYALTY FOUNDED ON THE  
ROCK OF HOPE AND PATIENCE\***

Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I count it a piece of singular good fortune that I should stand before you here today to tender to you, my brother Delegates of the Twentieth Indian National Congress, the same cordial, sincere and earnest welcome, on behalf of the Reception Committee, which it was my pride and privilege to tender to you on this very Congress platform exactly this day fifteen years ago. It is a piece of still greater good fortune for which both you and I cannot but be equally thankful, that I am supported on this occasion as on the last by the presence amongst us of one than whom India had never a warmer, truer, more devoted, more self-sacrificing, more faithful and more constant friend—you see him on my right, Sir William Wedderburn—whose name is now a household word amongst us, cherished with tender respect and affection. A noble type of the high-minded and high-souled Englishman at his best, it is owing to the fact of the existence and activity of such Englishmen in the ranks of Anglo-Indians and Civilians that our hopes and our aspirations escape from despair, and our attachment and our loyalty to British rule are preserved and strengthened. It never rains but it pours, says the proverb, which in its ignorance of the scheme of providence attributes to it partiality and favoritism, and I am tempted to boast of another piece of good fortune at finding that my Chairmanship is, on this occasion, as on the last, destined to be illustrated by the presidency of another such Englishman as I have described, Anglo-Indian and Civilian, who has, not yesterday or today, but throughout a career rising from the lowest to the highest step of the ladder, uniformly and consistently realized that he best served the interests of his own country and the great Service to which he belonged, by strictly and faithfully adhering to a policy of true righteousness and

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\*Address delivered by Sir P.M. Mehta, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Bombay Congress held on 26-28 December, 1904.



sympathy. But that is another story which will be presently unfolded at due length, after I have tried, if not tired, your patience for some time longer. I cannot however pass on without congratulating ourselves on the presence of a gentleman, one of the oldest and most respected Members of Parliament, who has for years, quietly and unostentatiously, but none the less nobly and earnestly, raised his voice in the interests of this country, I refer to Mr. Samuel Smith. But in the midst of these manifold congratulations, my vanity is checked by the reflection that after all, however man may propose, it is God who disposes. We looked forward at one time with enthusiastic anticipations on gaze on the kindly, radiant, and loving countenances of three, perhaps the oldest, patriarchs of the Congress. But the call of duty, which never call him in vain, has deprived us of the presence of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, and imperative considerations of health have deprived us of the opportunity of seeing once again the beloved and revered Founder of this body, Mr. Hume, and if I may so, his eldest son, Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee. But absent as they are, we will tell them that their names and deeds are and will for ever be cherished in our hearts with love, veneration and gratitude.

And now, Gentlemen, I trust that you will not think that I unduly indulge in the inveterate habit of the people of this "Kingdom of Bombay" to consider ourselves superior to all the rest of the country when, in view of the active and passive opposition offered in past years in other parts to the measures for accommodating the Congress, I congratulate myself on the fact that the account given by Sir William Hunter in his book on 'Lord Reay's Administration', as to the character of the relations between Europeans and Indians in this Presidency, has been amply borne out by the way in which we have been helped in securing the best sites available in Bombay for our manifold purposes. We have received kindly and generous assistance, from officials and non-officials alike, in a spirit of broad-minded liberality, justifying Sir William Hunter's observation that "the competition of races, although as keen as in any other Province, is here tempered by common interests,

mutual forbearance, and a certain reciprocal respect which impart a moderation to Bombay public opinion and to the Bombay Press in political crises''. The Pioneer said the other day that we shall presently denounce the Government that so kindly lent us the Oval as wicked. Let me assure it that we in Bombay, however, use no violent language ; and when we have to criticize Government, for even the Pioneer will not insist that it is beyond criticism, we will only call it erring and misguided.

But when I complacently congratulate ourselves on securing the best and healthiest sites for this year's Congress, I approach the question of this Pavilion and of the Encampment for your residence with some amount of nervousness. We have been told by some candid friends, or, if they will pardon me for saying so, by some critics who profess to be our friends only to be able to criticize us the more effectively, that we are only spasmodically wasting our energies, that this Congress gathering is only a show and a 'saturnalia of uncouth oratory', and that we are wantonly and extravagantly throwing away on an evanescent *tamasha*, monies which could be devoted for more solid and useful purposes. Now this criticism strikes me, Gentlemen, as very much like the criticism applied by Revenue Officer to the impoverished ryot, when they try to explain away agrarian indebtedness by the extravagance of his expenditure on festive and mourning occasions. As a matter of fact, the extravagance of the ordinary ryot on such occasions consists only in a few brass ornaments, a few sweetmeats, and an unlimited amount of tom-tom. So is it with us. Our Pavilion is not a Gothic temple with marble pillars and tessellated floors ; it is a structure of unhewn posts and canvas, decorated with strips of cheap muslin of Congress colors to look gay. We have not housed you in palatial buildings ; the canvas camp in which you are lodged has all, and more than all, the severity of military exigencies in a far campaign. To the amounts thus spent, our kind friends insist upon adding the travelling charges, as if all the Delegates would never have during Christmas stirred out

of their houses to enjoy the Christmas holidays, even if they were not attending the Congress. But even taking the whole total thus added up, I venture, Gentlemen, to see boldly that all this and much more would be well spent for fulfilling the purpose for which the Congress has been organized, and for achieving the aim and end for which the Congress is constituted. To those who decry the monies spent upon it as monies wasted on a show and a *tamasha*, I would say that they are no more men of real insight and true imagination than those whom one of the greatest of English poets—Wordsworth—has described with such infinite pity for their incapacity to enter into the true inwardness of things :

A primrose by the river brim,  
A yellow primrose is to him,  
And it is nothing more.

But if you realize it clearly and fully, there is no purpose more important, no mission more sacred, than the one that the Congress fulfils in the three short days to which it confines its session. It would be absurd to say that the Congress meets to deliberate and discuss and decide all the important subjects with which it deals. That task must be, and is, largely performed in the course of the years by such institutions as we may possess for forming Indian public opinion, in the common intercourse of social life, in local bodies more or less active, in the Native Press which is undoubtedly daily growing more and more capable and potent. At the end of the year, we all meet together, from different parts of the country, representatives of the people, not selected, it is true, by any authoritative or scientific process, but still representatives in all the various ways in which virtual representation works itself out in the early stages of its progressive development, representatives who are of the people and in immediate touch and cannot with them, representatives realizing in themselves the wants, the wishes, the sentiments, the aspirations of the people, representatives whose education has qualified them to ponder over grave questions of policy and principle in their application to the administration and Government of this

country in all their complex relations of a foreign rule, representatives into whom education has instilled an earnest, devoted, and enlightened loyalty to the British Crown and a keen solicitude for the safety and permanence of the British Empire in which, they are firmly persuaded lie implanted the roots of the welfare, the prosperity and the good government of this country, I say, we Delegates, representatives of the people, meet together at the end of the year to give voice to the public opinion of the country taking shape and formulating throughout the year, to present our Petition of Rights, our Grand Remonstrance, our appeal and our prayer for a firm and unfaltering grasp of a policy of wisdom and righteousness, for the reversal of retrograde measures inconsistent with such a policy, and for the adoption of means steadily ensuring the gradual development of free political progress.

“Broadening slowly down from precedent to precedent”.

Such an appeal and such a prayer can be most effectively offered at a great gathering like this by the unanimous voice of Delegates assembling from all parts of the country. If, gentlemen, we did nothing more than make this solemn petition and this earnest prayer, we shall not have spent our monies in vain we shall not have laboured for nought.

But we are told that we have done this for long and we have done this in vain. I absolutely dispute both these propositions. Has this Congress really grown old and grey, and has it really effected nothing? I reply that the Congress has not yet attained its majority; I reply that the surest testimony to the value of its achievements direct and indirect, and the force of its influence, is to be found in the very policy of reaction and retrogression which it has from time to time provoked, the tide following each successive ebb of which policy takes us, you may be sure, further and further on the path of progress and emancipation. To estimate this position rightly, let me lay before you the confession of faith of a devout and irreclaimable Congressman like myself. I am an inveterate, I am a robust optimist, like my late friend Mahadeva Govind

Ranade. I believe in divine guidance through human agency. It may be the fatalism of the East, but it is an active, not a passive fatalism, a fatalism which recognizes that the human wheels of the machinery must actively work to fulfil their appointed task. My humility saves me from the despair that seizes more impatient souls like those who have recently preached a gospel of despondency—I always seek hope and consolation in the words of the poet :

“I have not made the world, and  
He that has made it will guide.”

I derive patience from the same poet's teaching, “My faith is large in time, and that which shapes it to some perfect end.”

My steadfast loyalty is founded upon this rock of hope and patience. Seeking the will of Providence, like Oliver Cromwell, in dispensations rather than revelations, seeing God's will like him in fulfilment of vents, I accept British rule, as Ranade did, as a dispensation so wonderful,—a little island set at one end of the world establishing itself in a far continent as different as different could be,—that it would be folly not to accept it as a declaration of God's will. But, as I have often said, when, in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence this country was assigned to the care of England, the choice was offered to her as to Israel of old : Behold I have placed before you a blessing and a curse ; a blessing if ye will obey the commandments of the Lord your God ; a curse if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but go after other gods who ye have not known.” The possession of India would be a blessing to England if administered in the spirit of righteousness ; a curse if in the seductive spirit of worldliness. We cordially confess that in the main England has chosen wisely and well. The great and far seeing statesmen who presided at the consolidation of British rule in India proclaimed that the declared policy of the Crown in India should be one of righteousness, and they firmly and unequivocally announced it by the voice of the great and good Queen who then wore the Crown. But the acceptance and announcement of a policy of righteousness

is one thing, its application another. The adhesion to such a policy is not determined in a day ; it is not established without a long struggle between the forces of righteousness and those of worldliness, like upto the struggle between Hormazd and Ahriman. Even the chosen people of the Hebrew God continually relapsed, in spite of solemn covenants, into the worship of the gods of idolatry. Therefore it is that, while the oscillations and vicissitudes of the struggle go on, the hope expressed by the Viceroy in his reply to the address of the Bombay Corporation and echoed by Lord Ampthill before the Madras Corporation, that "there may be no two parties about England in India" is premature and practically futile. Such a hope is unreasonable and impracticable, while the pledges about equality of the Great Proclamation of 1858 are kept in the letter and broken in the spirit ; while the distinctions of race, colour and creed abolished by our Magna Charta are re-introduced under the plausible guise of being distinctions based on the distinctive merits and qualifications inherent in race ; while the burdens of Imperial Empire, which should be borne by the Empire including the Colonies, are disproportionately and heavily thrown on Indian finances ; while attempt after attempt is made to pass on Indian Exchequer military expenditure supposed to be necessitated by the vulnerable position of India, but really designed to meet supposed Imperialistic exigencies ; while the Indian subjects of His Majesty are allowed to be deprived of thier rights of equal citizenship, in the undisguised interests of the white races against the dark, in a way which responsible Ministers of the Crown had gravely declared furnished a just cause of war against the Boers ; while the economic relations between the two countries are adjusted more in the interests of the predominant than of the impotent partner ; while the development of the industries of the country is neglected or hampered for fear of competition with English industries ; while the "consuming love" for India in the breasts of the rulers has more the colour and character of affection towards a foster-child or a step-son than the equal and engrossing love for a natural son ; while the results of a really bona fide and laborious Commission like the Public Service Com-

mission, imperfect as they were, are attempted to be set aside and restricted by autocratic action, while the percentages of the admission of natives into the public service are estimated, not by the only true test of comparison with the promises made and rights established after public enquiry and deliberate action, but by the increases and decreases with those of years long previous to such pledges and promises, totally ignoring the recognition of subsequent years of "the just claims of the natives of India to higher and more extensive employment in the public service" as stated in the Resolution of the Government of India appointing the Public Service Commission; while the people are being emasculated by the wholesale operation of the Arms Act to the future detriment of the interests of both England and India; while the small modicum of independence possessed by the Indian Universities is ruthlessly annihilated, and the Universities turned substantially into departments of Government, so that the breeding of the discontented B.A., "that distinct political danger," may be stopped or limited, and while—but it is not needful to go on any further.

We thus see that the hope of there being no two parties about England in India is not founded in the realities of the situation. It is another form of the same advice that has been also recently showered upon us by Viceroys and Lieutenant—Governors, that there should be no political agitation in this country. I wish to speak with all respect for these disinterested advisers; but I cannot help comparing them to that delightful "Poor man's friend" Sir Joseph Bowley, so admirably depicted by Dickens: Your only business, my good fellow, is with me. You needn't trouble yourself to think about anything. I will think for you; I know what is good for you; I am your perpetual parent. Such is the dispensation of an all-wise Providence. What man can do I do, I do my duty as the Poor Man's Friend and Father, and I endeavour to educate his mind, by inculcating on all occasions the one great lesson which that class requires, that is, entire Dependence on Myself. They have no business whatever with themselves." This is a free

but graphic para-phrase of what has been anxiously dinned into our ears recently from various quarters. I venture to say that to accept this advice would be equally demoralizing to the rulers and the ruled. It ignores all the laws of human progress, it ignores the workings of human nature, it ignores environment and surroundings. We may be as well told to cease to breathe, to think or to feel. Political agitation there will always be. The only question is whether we should suppress and bottle up our feelings and hopes and aspirations and our grievances in the innermost recesses of our own hearts, in the secret conclave of our own brethren, or deal with them in the free light of open day. The former course would be preferred by the prophets of despair. We, gentlemen, prefer the latter, because we have faith in the ultimate wisdom, beneficence, and righteousness of the English people. Curiously enough, gentlemen, this advice to cease political agitation found an echo, where one would have least expected it, in a corner of Bengal. To our astonishment, we were one day treated to a homily at a Provincial Conference in that Presidency on the thesis that subject races could have no politics ! We were exhorted to abandon them in favour of industrial and scientific organizations. I trust, gentlemen, I will not be taken to undervalue the good work done in establishing the Association for the advancement of Industrial Science ; it is already doing excellent work in conferring various industrial and technical scholarships of Rs. 100 and more. But I may be allowed to say that when I read the report of the public meeting at which the Association was inaugurated, I could not help wondering whether our European friends who were actively supporting the movement were doing so with the hope of weaning our Bengali brethren from the bad habit to which they are supposed to be specially addicted of excessive political agitation, or whether our Bengali friends were endeavouring to coax their European friends to help them by specious professions of giving up their favourite vice and turning out reformed characters. I will abstain, however, from attributing motives as we are now perpetually advised to do by those who preach but never practise the virtue. It is needless



to seriously controvert the thesis advanced by these Bengali friends, utterly unhistoric and unmanly as it is. If they will pardon me, I will only tell them how I regard them. They seem to me to be the Esaus of Bengal ready to sell their birth-right for a mass of pottage. However, fragrant and nourishing that pottage may be represented to be, we will not sell our birth-right for it. But I am sure that there is no difficulty in retaining both the one and the other, the other, the birth-right as well as the pottage.

But, gentlemen, let us go back to the pendulum which we have left to oscillate between righteousness and wordliness for too long a time, and see how far the Congress has worked in propelling in the right direction. Never had the pendulum oscillated so violently as in Lord Lytton's time. The policy of righteousness was openly scouted. It was declared that having won India by breaking all the Ten Commandments, it was too late to govern it to the principles of the Sermon on the Mount. The country was thrown into a state of doubt and perplexity, of alarm and uneasiness. From this unfortunate position it was rescued by the advent of Lord Ripon. In him we got back the true old English statesman, wise in his noble generosity and far sighted in his righteousness. Englishmen will never know the true value of Lord Ripon's services to British rule. He added buttresses of enduring strength to the citadel of our loyalty. It is to him we owe that in the darkest days of gloom and reaction we always confidently look forward to rays of light and hope. Except perhaps the great measure of local self Government and that of the Bengal Tenancy Act, which was intensely unpopular with the Zamindars of Bengal, he conferred no impossible boons or charters on us. He did not tell us, as the present Viceroy did, in his last Budget speech, that "I do not think that the salvation of India is to be sought in the field of politics at the present stage of her development and it is not my conception to earn a cheap applause by offering so-called boons for which the country is not ready and for which my successors and not I would have to pay the price". Neither was it Lord Ripon's conception of states-

manship, nor did he confer any boons for which the country was not ripe. And still, to use the words of the self-same speech he heartily and genuinely sympathized with the real and progressive sympathy of true Liberalism, as Mr. Morley recently defined it in America, and not with the narrow prejudice of Conservative fear and mistrust of all progress and liberty, "with the aspirations of the Indians towards greater national unity and with their desire to play a part in the public life of the country". As these twofold sentiments are enunciated in the last Budget speech of Lord Curzon there is confusion, instead of correlation between them. Why is the salvation of India not to be sought, at least partially, on the field of politics at all times now and hereafter, if official sympathy with Indian aspirations and desire to play a part in the public life of this country is deep and genuine? How can these aspirations and desires be even gradually achieved, unless we are allowed to play at all times a modest and temperate part on the field of politics? And I venture to say that it is unfair and unjust to charge us with desiring to play any but a most modest and temperate part on the field of politics, and to warn us off altogether from it. How easily we are satisfied, when we are assured of sympathetic and righteous treatment by a frank and convinced acceptance of the principles of policy underlying the pledges and promises given to us, is shown by the fact that little as he actually did for us, Lord Ripon's name and fame are reverently and imperishably cherished in the hearts of the millions of this country. The establishment of the Congress was almost synchronous with the departure of Lord Ripon from this country. Ever since then we have been endeavouring to formulate and place before Government measures upon which the country has come almost to an unanimous opinion as needed for the purpose of redressing grievances as well as promoting the legitimate welfare and progress of the people. It is a task which we undertook under a strong sense of duty. If, as the Viceroy eloquently said in his last Budget speech, "the country and its educated classes were making a steady advance on the path of intellectual and moral progress," it would have been a

grave dereliction of duty if they had not come forward on the field of politics, and, a I now repeat, what I repeated before, if they had not devoted their new culture and their energy to the task, not of supplanting their rulers, but of supplementing the endeavours of the best and most sagacious among them by proposing modifications and developments based on their peculiar, intuitive and native knowledge and information, and suggested in gratitude and loyalty by that enlightenment and education which we freely admit has been one of the most precious gifts bestowed upon us by British rule. A wise and prudent statesman would so encourage us in performing this task by kindly sympathy and advice as to compel us, so to say, to perform with anxious care and moderation. To me it seems a grave political blunder to engender bitterness and excess by treating the Congress with dislike and resentment. It is for this reason that I deplore the attitude of our English friends towards the Congress. They have failed to understand the somewhat curious phenomenon, which they have recently observed, of some of our co-workers condemning the Congress for its disappointing inutility, and they have exultingly pointed out that this condemnation has proceeded from what has been considered the extreme wing of the Congress, and they have received these denunciations of us with cheers. But let our rulers try to realize that the men whom they cheer do not possibly desire to abandon altogether the field of politics, but may in time be carried away vainly to imagine that the failure of constitutional methods like those of the Congress was an argument to substitute others not so strictly temperate. However that may be, I repeat now, as before, that we of the Congress have always steadily and firmly conceived our mission to be imposed by duty, sanctified by patriotism and guided by loyalty, unswayed by the resentment of our rulers or by the despairing counsels of the pessimists among ourselves. Therefore it is that our mission has been blest and our labours have not been in vain.

I thus come back to relate the record of the achievements of the Congress. I can do so briefly, as it has been excellently

summarized in the last number of "India," a paper whose valuable services to our cause, have, not, I am afraid, been so fully appreciated as they have deserved, showing how imperfect are we ourselves,—a good thing to remember, especially when we are engaged in criticizing others. Our earliest efforts were directed towards securing a platform from which we could authoritatively expound our views, and they bore fruit in 1892 in the passing of the Indian Councils Act for enlarging and expanding the Councils and substantially and practically introducing the principle of election in the appointment of their members. The voice of the Congress was potent in obtaining the Commission for enquiring into Indian expenditure. Our demand for Simultaneous Examinations for the Indian Civil Service was so far successful that Mr. Paul's motion in favour of it was accepted by the House of Commons. The strenuous opposition to reduce the motion into practice offered by the Indian Government has hitherto prevailed. We had however obtained the Public Service Commission whose recommendations, though not going far enough as we desired, and further throttled by the Government of India, still laid down principles, from which, alas, it is now attempted to retreat by autocratic action without any new public enquiry or deliberation. We have also urgently pressed upon the attention of Government, perhaps the most far-reaching and anxious problem of Indian administration, the economic problem of the poverty of the people and its concomitant agrarian indebtedness ; and though Government fight shy of the only true remedies, it is still a hopeful sign to see them labouring to discover less unpalatable solutions of the problem. Following upon the half-hearted trial of Agricultural Banks long suggested by us, we may still induce them to grant the enquiry so influentially recommended by the Indian Famine Union. Very early in our history, we proved so conclusively the essential desirability in the interests of sound and just administration of the separation of judicial and executive functions, that a statesmanlike Lord Dufferin felt constrained to admit it to be a counsel of perfection, and we have so far succeeded that now it is only on the score of ex-

pense that the change is ostensibly shelved, the real reason being the strong disinclination of District Officers to part with power once enjoyed, as if Revenue Officers did not possess power enough and to spare, with stringent Land Revenue Codes and the jealous exclusion of the jurisdiction of Civil Courts in revenue matters. One of the earliest subjects which engaged the attention of the Congress was the urgent need of a thorough reform and reorganization of the Police Force. The forecast of the Report of the Police Commission published in England has ultimately borne out the national view of the character of the force against the official view which continued to insist that the aspersions to which the police was popularly subject were largely unjust and undeserved. In this connexion I may be permitted to say one word as to the bureaucratic policy now in vogue with regard to the Reports of and evidence were immediately issued to give time for public discussion and criticism before Government proceeded to deal with them. At St. Andrew's Dinner at Calcutta the other day, Sir Andrew Fraser vindicated the new police not only with regard to the Report of the Policy Commission, but with regard also to other important subjects engaging the attention of Government, stating as an axiomatic truth that no statement could be properly made in regard to them till the decision of the Secretary of State for India was received. It seems to benighted non-officials like us that this course is an exaggeration of the demoralized attitude of a secret and irresponsible bureaucracy as Sir C. Dilke once called it. The Secretary of State in this way arrives at a decision under the inspiration of the Government of India without the benefit of open and public discussion and criticism. Indeed in such cases we are gravely told that it would be sacrilegious to touch with profane hands the tablets sent down from Mount Sinai. The mischief thus done is so incalculable, that I would fain take the liberty to ask the bureaucrats of our Indian administration to ponder on the observations of one of the ablest and keenest of political thinkers—Mr. Walter Bagehot—"Not only" says he, "does a bureaucracy tend to under-government in point of quality; it tends to over-government in point of quantity."

The trained official hates the rude, untrained public. He thinks they are stupid, ignorant, reckless—that they cannot tell their own interest. A bureaucracy is sure to think that its duty is to argument official power, official business, or official members rather than leave free the energies of mankind ; it over-does the quantity of Government as well as impairs its quality.” These words were spoken of bureaucracy in civilized European countries. They apply with ten-fold force in this country with its Official Secrets’ Act, which it is a mistake to suppose is inert while it does not explode in public prosecutions. The Act puts a premium on corruption, on the one hand, and, on the other, it surely and inevitably deteriorates and demoralizes irresponsible officials working in the dark. To resume our narrative of the achievements of the Congress. We were the first, in spite of spurious claims to the honor, to draw attention in view of the poverty of the agricultural masses to the need of technical and industrial education, and forced it in many practical ways on the attention of the people as well as Government. In this connexion, I trust that the scheme of an Institute of Research may not be allowed to fail on account of the death of Mr. Tata, a death the whole country deplores, but may soon become an accomplished fact, magnificent monument of the patriotism and munificence of its author. We have also pressed upon Government the great cause of Temperance. We advocated from the first reduction in the oppressive burden of the Salt tax, and the raising of the assessable minimum of the Income-tax, both which reforms have been recently carried out. I think I need not proceed further with my enumeration. It is an honorable record. It is a record which leaves no room for disappointment or despair. But further, as is again well pointed out in “India”, what is particularly apt to be over-looked, is that “we are by no means sure but the greatest work of all is its negative work, where the results do not appear in any particular reform or political change.” And I may well repeat here, to cheer our hearts and brace our energies, the beautiful lines quoted by Mr. Hume in his letter to us published in “India.”

"For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,  
Seemed here no painful inch to gain,  
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,  
Comes silent, flooding in the main".

Laden with these gains, the Congress comes back to "its own native land." I well remember the day when we launched it anxiously, but hopefully, 19 years ago. When it came back to us in 1889, a babe only five years old, it had already broadened and strengthened wonderfully. It again comes back to us fifteen years after, a handsome lad on the point of attaining his majority. It has not escaped some jealousy and rivalry. Other children whom we are assured were excessively pretty and handsome have been pressed upon us as specially deserving our love and affection. Well, Gentlemen, our hearts are large and our minds are broad, and what we have done is that we have inconveniently adopted them all. One, you will see in this very pandal, a gentle and solemn little lady in a grave gathering assembling immediately after us. Another you will see, robust and vigorous, decorated with jewels and ornaments wrought in this very country, on the Oval yonder. But, Gentlemen, our affections remain unchanged from our eldest-born, and we refuse to deprive him of his rights of primogeniture.

I think, Gentlemen, I have said enough to show that we have met here together from all parts of the country to pursue a noble mission, hallowed to us from a sense of duty, of patriotism, and of loyalty, all welded together by the principles of justice and righteousness which, after all is said and done, we gratefully recognize as the dominant principles of English rule in this country. We truly and earnestly respond to the words in which Lord Curzon adjured us the other day on his landing—"I pray, I pray the Native Community in India, to believe in the good faith, in the high honour, and in the upright purpose of my countrymen. Gentlemen, it is because we do sincerely believe in that good faith, in that high honour and that upright purpose, that we meet here in the open light

of day to appeal to their noble and righteous impulses, by all lawful and constitutional means, so to discharge the sacred trust reposed in them by Providence, that it may redound to the glory and greatness of both countries. But I must be pardoned for saying, that when the respond to this prayer, we do not respond to it in the slavish spirit in which the great Earl of Strafford exhorted the people of England to obey the King ; "Let them attend upon his will with confidence in his justice belief in his wisdom, and assurance in his parental affections". We respond to it rather in the spirit of an ideal sketched—I will take an extremely modern instance—by a highly placed Anglo-Indian Civil Servant whom,—though you will be perhaps surprised to hear it—I venture to describe as a Congresswala in disguise, as eloquent and as far-reaching as some of our own elders, say, Surendranath Bannerjee or Lal-mohun Ghose. I refer to Sir William Lee-Warner. At an Address delivered by him at the Elphinstone College Union, Sir William Lee-Warner eloquently depicted the ideal towards which British rule in India was tending :

"It is no narrow principle of a paternal Government or a rule for the benefit of the ruler which sent for the Roman with this poet's sailing orders.

*'Tu regere imperio populos Romane memento,'* or which fostered differences as aiding the central authority, *Divide et impera*. Its aim is less to govern than to call forth the progressive capacity and to teach self-government. It desires to lift up the lower ranks of society and the subject to the pedestal of the ruler. 'Humanity' and 'Heaven's light our guide,' are its watchwords, and they are embodied in your *Magna Charta*, the Queen's Proclamation, issued by the ruler whose authority had just been defied and restored by the sword. There are three supreme ideas of mankind, the family, the nation and humanity. The Hindu and the Greek rules thought of the first, the Roman Empire of the second ; but the British nation accepts the last and highest as its ruling idea. I venture to point out to you that from God's nature



the British nation has learnt the grand idea of humanity, and that the legislation and administration of India under the Queen bears testimony to Her Majesty's desire to recognize a progressive future as before all those committed to her care. The protection of the weak, equality in the eye of the law, justice, and a common participation in the benefits, and when the time comes, in the task of good government are at least the aims which the British Government sets before it."

It is in the active spirit of this ideal that we respond, and respond cordially, to Lord Curzon's prayer to believe in the good faith, in the high honour, and in the upright purpose of his countrymen. May we pray in return that when we ask to be allowed to cooperate in this noble task, that Lord Curzon and his countrymen will believe that we too of the Congress are inspired by duty, patriotism and loyalty.

I again tender to you my warmest welcome—a welcome mixed of gratitude for the past and high hope for the future, with patience and perseverance for our motto. Let us take to our hearts the homely but noble words of Longfellow :

"Let us then be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate,  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labour and to wait."

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In this session 22 resolutions were passed. Resolution I was related to Indian Public Services. It said :

- (a) Resolved that in the opinion of this Congress, the principles and policy enunciated by the Government of India in their resolution, dated 24th May 1904, on the subject of the employment of Indians in the higher grades of the Public Service, are inconsistent with those laid down in the Parliamentary Statute of 1833 and the Proclamation of 1858 by the late Queen Empress, and

this Congress enters its respectful but emphatic protest against an attempt to explain away pledges solemnly given by the Sovereign and Parliament to the people of this country, and to deviate from arrangements deliberately arrived at by the Government after a careful examination of the whole question by a Public Commission.

- (b) That this Congress is of opinion that the true remedy for many existing financial and administrative evils lies in the wider employment of Indians in the higher branches of the country's service ; and while concurring with previous Congresses in urging that immediate effect should be given to the Resolution of the House of Commons of 2nd June, 1893, in favour of holding the competitive examinations for service in India simultaneously in England and in India, the Congress places on record its firm conviction that the only satisfactory solution of this question is to be found in the reorganization of the Indian Civil Service, which should be reconstituted on a decentralized basis its judicial functions in the meantime being partly transferred to persons who have been trained in the profession of Law.
- (c) That the Congress deplores the abolition of the competitive test for the Provincial Service in most Provinces of India. Past experience has amply established the fact that a system of Government nomination degenerates, in the special circumstances of this country, into a system of appointment by official favour, and this, by bringing unfit men into the service impairs the efficiency of the administration, and in addition unfairly discredits the fitness of Indians for high office. This Congress, therefore, respectfully urges the Government of India to restore the competitive test for the Provincial Service, wherever it has been abolished."

Resolution II was related to higher education. It said :

**“Resolved that this Congress, while thanking the Government of India for the increased outlay on Primary Education, promised in their Resolution of March last, and for the institution of ten Technical Scholarships for the study of technical arts and industries in foreign countries, repeats its protest of last year against the retrograde policy adopted by Government in regard to Higher Education, as calculated to officialize the governing bodies of the Universities and to restrict the scope of University Education generally ; and the Congress places on record its emphatic opinion that in view of the large surpluses which the Government are now realizing year after year, it is their clear duty to make a much larger allotment than at present out of public opinion funds for educational expenditure so as :**

- (a) to spread primary education more widely among the mass of the people, and to make a beginning in the direction of free and compulsory education ;**
- (b) to make due provision for imparting instruction in manual training and in scientific agriculture ;**
- (c) to provide for the better manning and equipment of Government Colleges and High Schools so as to make them really model institutions ;**
- (d) to establish at least one central fully equipped Polytechnic Institute in the country, with minor Technical Schools and Colleges in different Provinces.”**

**“Resolution III urged the removal of the poverty of the Indian people. It said :**

**Resolved that this Congress is of opinion that the deplorable poverty of the people of this country is mainly due to the drain of wealth from the country that has gone on for years, to the decay of indigenous arts and industries, to over-assessment of land, and to the excessively costly character of the system of administration. And the Congress recommends the following among other remedial measures :**

- (a) That Government be pleased to afford greater encouragements to education, as indicated in the previous resolution.
- (b) That the Permanent Settlement be extended to such parts of the country as are now ripe for it, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Secretary of State for India's Despatches of 1862 and 1867 on the subject; and that where Government may still deem it inadvisable to introduce the Permanent Settlement, judicial restrictions be imposed on over-assessment.
- (c) That steps be taken to employ a much larger number of Indians in the higher branches of the Public Service."

Resolution IV demanded removal of the indebtedness of the Indian peasants. Resolution V desired removal of the conditions of hardship of the Indian settlers living in British Colonies. Resolution VI expressed deep sorrow at the death of J.N. Tata and William Digby. Resolution VII demanded that the salary of the Secretary of State for India be paid out of the British exchequer. Resolution VIII desired lessening of the burden of taxation on the Indian people. Resolution IX demanded greater share of the Indians in administration. Resolution X expressed shock of the Congress at Tibetan Expedition.

Resolution XI demanded implementation of the recommendations of the Police Commission. Resolution XII desired cut in the military expenditure. Resolution XIII repeated the demand of the Congress for separation of executive and judiciary. Resolution XIV has an importance of its own which protested against the proposal of the partition of Bengal. It said :

"Resolved that this Congress records its emphatic protest against the proposals of the Government of India, for the Parti-

tion of Bengal in any manner whatsoever. That the proposals are viewed with great alarm by the people, as the division of the Bengali nation into separate units well seriously interfere with its social, intellectual and material progress, involving the loss of various constitutional, and other rights and privileges which the Province has so long enjoyed and will burden the country with heavy expenditure which the Indian tax-payers cannot at all afford.

The Congress is of opinion that no case has been made out for the partition of Bengal, but if the present constitution of the Bengal Government is considered inadequate for the efficient administration of the Province, the remedy lies not in any redistribution of its territories, but in organic changes in the form of the Government, such as the conversion of the Lieutenant-Governership of Bengal into a Governorship, with an Executive Council like that of Bombay and Madras."

Resolution XV said that a committee of Indian leaders should visit England at the time of general election there so as to present the case of India before the British electorate. Resolution XVI solicited the support of the English voters for the election of leaders like Naoroji, Cotton and Jardine. Resolution XVII thanked Sir William Wedderburn and other members of the British Committee for their disinterested services. Resolution XVIII said about the reappointment of Hume as the Secretary and of Wacha and Gokhale as the Joint General Secretaries of the Congress for the ensuing year. Resolution XIX said that the question of the Constitution of the Congress be referred for report to a Committee.\* Resolu-

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\*This Committee included P.M. Mehta, W.E. Wacha, G.K. Gokhale and Ibrahim Rahimtoolah from Bombay ; C. Sankaran Nair, Krishna Swamy Aiyer, M. Vir Raghava Chari and Nawab Syed Muhammed from Madras ; Surendranath Banerjea, Ambika Charan Mazumdar, Baikunth Nath Sen and Abdul Kasim from Bengal ; Lala Lajpat Rai, Dharamdas and Lal Harikishen Lal from the Punjab ; Ganga Prasad Verma, Pandit M.M. Ma'viya and S. Sinha from the U.P. ; R.N. Mudholkar, M.V. Joshi and M.K. Padhya from the C.P. and Berar.

tion XX said about holding of the next session after Christmas in 1905 at a time and place as decided afterwards. Resolution XXI offered thanks to the Chairman and members of the Reception Committee for their services. Finally, Resolution XXII offered thanks to the President of the Congress.

A study of the role of the Indian National Congress during the first twenty years of its existence clearly shows that it gradually became a truly national organisation. The fundamental change in its character became evident from the fact that it no longer remained like, what Hume had conceived, a mere safety-valve of the British Empire. It widened the scope of its aims and objects so as to be true to the creed of a nationalist organisation. The official historian of the Congress, therefore, well observes : "Great institutions have always had small beginnings, even as the great rivers of the world start as thin streams. At the commencement of the career and course, they progress rapidly and as they widen, become slower and steadier. By the confluence of their various tributaries, they are enriched as they flow on, both in volume and content. The evolution of the Indian National Congress presents the same phenomenon. It had to cut its way through mighty obstacles and therefore entertained modest ideas. As it gained a foothold on the affections of the people, it widened its course and absorbed into itself several collateral movements wedded to the solution of social, ethical, and economic problems. Its activities were in the earlier stages naturally characterised by a sense of diffidence and doubt. As it attained man's estate, it became more and more conscious of its strength and capacity, and its outlook was soon widened. From an attitude of prayerfulness and importunity, it developed self-consciousness and self-assertion. This was followed by an intensive campaign of education and propaganda which rapidly resulted in extensive organisation of the country and campaigns of direct action. Starting with the humble object of seeking redress of grievances, the Congress ere long developed into the one accredited organ of the Nation that proudly put forth its demands. Limited as its

range of vision was in the earlier decades to matters administrative, it soon became a powerful and authoritative exponent of the political ambitions of the people of India. Its doors were thrown open to every class of citizens and to every grade of society. Though in the beginning it fought shy of the problems that were described as social, yet in the fulness of time, it recognised no such compartmentalism of life ; and surviving the traditional and time-honoured demarcation of life issues as social and political, it has developed a comprehensive ideal in which life is considered as one and indivisible.”\*

\*B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya ; *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 19.

## **CONGRESS—MODERATISM AND THE MOVEMENT FOR SELF-RULE**

A fundamental change occurred in the character of the Indian National Congress in 1905 as a result of the misdeeds of the administration of Viceroy Lord Curzon that saw their culmination in the partition of Bengal.\* No doubt, Bengal was a very big province and its division into two parts could be justified in the name of administrative efficiency and economy. But the way Curzon did it made it quite above board that the

\*As the Official Report of the Congress says : "The Congress met at a great crisis in the political fortunes of this country. Never since the dark days of Lord Lytton's Viceroyalty had India been so distracted, discontented, despondent ; the victim of so many misfortunes, political and other ; the target for so much scorn and calumny emanating from the highest quarters—its most moderate demands ridiculed and scouted, its most reasonable prayers greeted with a stiff negative, its noblest aspirations spurned and denounced as pure mischief or solemn nonsense, its most cherished ideals hurled down from their pedestal and trodden under foot—never had the condition of India been more critical than it was during the second ill-starred administration of Lord Curzon. The Official Secrets Act was passed in the teeth of universal opposition. It was condemned by the whole press—Indian and Anglo-Indian—protests from all quarters poured in, but Lord Curzon was implacable and the Gagging Act was passed. Education was crippled and mutilated, it was made expensive and it was officialised ; and so that most effective instrument for the enslavement of our National interest, the Indian Universities Act, was passed, and the policy of checking, if not altogether undoing the noble work of Bentinck, Macaulay and Halifax, which for more than half a century has been continued with such happy results to the country, came in full swing."



real aim was to weaken the growing force of Indian nationalism by dividing the Hindus in majority in the western part and the Muslims in majority in the eastern part of this province. By all means, the motivating idea was to implement the colonial policy of 'divide and rule' with greater vigour. It brought about such a striking change in the attitude of the prominent liberals (like Surendranath Banerjea and Gopal Krishna Gokhale) that in respect of utterances the distinguishing line between the Moderates and the Extremists (like Tilak and B.C. Pal) became almost blurred. The proceedings of the Congress sessions held at Kashi (1905), Calcutta (1906) and Surat (1907) bear eloquent testimony to this fact.

#### *The Twenty-First Session (1905)*

This session opened at Kashi (Benares) on 27 December and sat for four days. It was attended by 758 delegates—209 from Bengal, 203 from U.P., 105 from Punjab (1 from the Frontier area), 110 from Bombay and Sindh, 65 from Madras, 64 from the C.P., Berar and Secunderabad, and 2 from Burma. This was the first occasion when the Frontier area was represented. Munshi Madholal delivered the welcome address. After that Pandit Bishamber Nath proposed and Romesh Chunder Dutt seconded the name of Gopal Krishna Gokhale for the post of the President. He was elected and he took the chair amid resounding cheers.

#### **RUDE SHOCK TO THE SENSE OF LOYALTY\***

Brother-Delegates, Ladies, and Gentlemen :

Before addressing you I must say one thing, viz., that you cannot expect anything like a speech from me, but as in duty bound I beg on behalf of the Reception Committee of the 21st Indian National Congress, to offer you, brother-delegates, a most cordial welcome. The citizens of Benares shared in the

\*Address delivered by Munshi Madholal, Chairman, Reception Committee at the Kashi Congress held in December, 1905.

past with their fellow-citizens of the rest of the United Provinces the honour of inviting the Congress on two occasions to Allahabad and once to Lucknow. But they feel far happier that they have the privilege today of welcoming the best and brightest sons of India, the representatives of every province and every class, to their ancient city. I assure you that we are all deeply grateful to you that you accepted our humble invitation, that you have responded to it not only cheerfully but enthusiastically as your numbers testify today. Speaking for myself, I cannot adequately express my sense of pleasure and pride that it is my privilege today to welcome you to this, my native city. The only circumstance which somewhat affects that joy is the consciousness that I am not worthy of this honour. However, such as I am, I accord to you, in the name and on behalf of the people of the United Provinces generally, and of the citizens of Benares in particular, a most cordial welcome. Another circumstance which checks my enthusiasm is the painful consciousness of many defects in the arrangements that we have made for your reception. Most earnestly do I beg of you, all, my brother-delegates, to generously overlook our shortcomings, to accept the will for the deed, and attribute our imperfections to the head and not to the heart. I pray you, as men who understand from experience the many difficulties by which Congress Reception Committees, particularly in backward places, like Benares, are apt to be confronted at every step, to be indulgent to your inexperienced hosts in the spirit of fellow-workers and comrades in a common cause. In speaking of our difficulties I cannot but refer to the assistance kindly given to us by the civil and military authorities of this place. We would not have been able to secure this excellent plateau of Rajghat, the best site available in the city, but for their kind help. When I recall to mind the bitter terms in which my distinguished predecessor in this chair, the still lamented Pandit Ajudhianath complained of the obstacle put in this way by officials of the day, and compare that attitude with the kindly sympathy extended to the Reception Committee of this year, I cannot but feel that we have every reason to congratulate ourselves on the welcome change that has come

over these backward Provinces. With your permission, brother-delegates, I desire to take this opportunity of publicly thanking our esteemed Commissioner, Mr. D.C. Baillie, our popular Collector, Mr. E.H. Radice, the ever-helpful Mr. P.B. Bramley, District Superintendent of Police, and General Sir Alfred Gaselee, for helping us in securing this site close by the noble river, which is the pride of India, and so conveniently near to the railway station.

I must also gratefully mention the name of Mr. A.W.U. Pope, Traffic Superintendent of the Outh and Rohilkhand Railway, who, with all the resources of his Railway, readily helped us in securing water and other conveniences. Brother-delegates,—I conceive the duties of the Chairman of the Reception Committee consist more in organizing the reception and entertainment of delegates than in discussing the political situation of the day. But under pressure from esteemed and valued friends, I have had to decide to follow the precedent long since established and make the following observations :

I regard the Indian National Congress as the intellectual product of British rule and English education, and one which ought, therefore, to be treated with tender regard by those whose duty it is to govern this country on British principles. No doubt the Congress was not looked upon with friendly eyes in its earlier stages ; but I am glad to think that the time is long gone by when the stale charge of disloyalty could be brought against us, when our national aspirations were ridiculed, when our representations on public questions could be dismissed without consideration. In saying this, I do not overlook recent events which were unfortunately calculated to shake the faith of the more impatient among us, in the efficiency of constitutional agitation, and in the benevolence of purpose of the British rule in India. But, brother-delegates, they are but inevitable incidents of public life, and we may be sure, they do not represent the attitude towards educated Indians of the majority of Englishmen in this country, much less in free England. I must admire the love of justice and fair

play of the English nation. Whatever we choose to say they allow us to sit here and discuss their actions and to criticise them. This is, I say, the greatest virtue of the British Empire. If you go and hold a Congress in Gwalior, Hyderabad or Mysore, you will be driven out of it, and you will have there no Congress of this kind. If you go to Kabul you will be blown up in one second. This is the great benefit which the British Government has conferred on us. The position of the Congress was officially established, when Lord Lansdowne declared 15 years ago that the Government of India recognized that it represented in this country what the advanced Liberal Party was in England.

The intellectual aristocracy of India are represented, if anywhere, in this Congress, and no civilized and progressive Government such as ours is, can afford long to ignore or disregard it. And we shall be unpardonably failing in our duty, if we shall allow any private reason or public discouragement to come between us and service to our mother-land. I will give but one illustration of the necessity of bringing our wishes and aspirations to the notice of Government. Standing as I do here as a representative of the Sipahi Nagar class, whose ancestors come to these Provinces as soldiers, I keenly feel that the Government should exclude the martial classes from the higher ranks of military service. I am thankful to the Government, however, for appointing a few members of the Imperial Cadet Corps as Commissioned Officers in the Army. This however is only in the nature of a meagre first instalment. Why should not the sons of noblemen and men of the middle class also be appointed to commissions in the Army, if they are qualified for same? Why should not the suggestion of His Royal Highness, the Duke of Connaught, to establish an Indian Sandhurst be carried out? It is not a wise policy to exclude the martial race of Indian soldiers from the higher rank of the Army. Merit and not race should be the qualifying test. The Indian soldier has established his title to the confidence of the rulers in many a battle-field throughout the Empire by his valour as well as devotion and cannot be per-

manently denied the higher rewards of his service. It is only necessary that we should persistently press his claim on the attention of the Government for it to be granted. I venture to think that even the Imperial Cadet Corps would not have been established without the long continued agitation of the Congress and the Indian Press. And we who believe that the Indian soldier is the backbone of the British Army in this country, owe it not only to ourselves but to the Government that we must not rest until the just concessions for which we have been praying are granted. The importance of the matter being what it is, may I not venture to appeal to the powers that be to signalise the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales by carrying out in practice the professed intention of our rulers to treat Indians on equal terms with other classes of His Majesty's subjects by throwing open to them the superior posts in the Army?

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is not within my province to discuss the subjects that will be brought before the Congress for the consideration of the assembled delegates. And I am particularly anxious not to increase your natural impatience which I fully share to hear the selfless man and stainless gentleman, an ornament of his race and the pride of his country, whom you will presently elect as your President. But the circumstances of the year compel me to say a few words on one subject which is uppermost in the public mind. Speaking as an Indian and a non-Bengali I desire to assure my brethren of Bengal, of my and your deep sympathy in the misfortune that has befallen them in the partition of their fair and great Province. The Partition of Bengal in an arbitrary manner and in spite of universal opposition that the measure has provoked I regard as impolitic and unjust. If there was any truth in the late Viceroy's utterance that to defy or ignore public opinion is not statesmanship, and we have been told on high authority that truthfulness is a special virtue of Europeans, then it is inexplicable how the sentiment of United Bengal came to be so deliberately disregarded by the same high functionary. I do not, however, believe that it is useless now to protest against

the accomplished fact. There is such an institution in existence as the British House of Commons, and we are fortunate, too at present in possessing a Secretary of State who, I take it, does not believe in the doctrine of Divide and Rule. If I may be permitted to do so, I would suggest to our friends of Bengal the advisability of sending a strong deputation to England by the time the new Parliament meets, to impress on India's friends over there the imperative necessity of restoring the unity of their Province.

The Partition of Bengal is, I think, a mistake. I further think that it is a matter which must be represented to Parliament as strongly as possible. I hold that the Parliament ought to exercise its influence in this respect. The Parliament is far off from us. In minor questions they have no material to interfere, but in questions of higher importance, they ought to show that there is a Parliament. I appeal to Mr. Morley to interfere. It will show the strength of the British Empire, if he interferes and puts an end to this mischief. What the Parliament is perhaps afraid of is that the prestige will go, if it undoes what the higher officers here have done. I am sure it is quite different. If you look to the claims of your own subjects, these will bring you more prestige than the confirming of what your higher officers have done. You remember what Ramchander said to Dasarath when he asked him not to go to the jungle after having previously enjoined him to do the same. He said, "My father, you give me two orders—one to go to the jungle and the other to remain. But I will only obey the order which is just and good." It is the duty of all the world to follow justice and not to be guided by considerations of loss of prestige. This is the time for Parliament to show to the world that it exists for the benefit of India. I appeal to the King-Emperor to use his prerogative, which he has, once in favour of India. That will show that we have a Parliament which looks upon us as its children and protects us when the time comes. I cannot say anything 'more on this question'. I think it has been a great cruelty to me that my friends should have asked me to say something. I am not an

educated man ; I belong to the agricultural class, cannot speak much. The agricultural classes are dumb. But with all my defects, I give you a President, better than whom nobody could be given. Now you will have to elect your President.

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In this session 24 resolutions were passed. Resolution I most humbly and respectfully offered a loyal and dutiful welcome to Their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and the Princess of Wales, on the occasion of their visit to India. Resolution II demanded reforms of the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils in a way that the number of non-official and elected members was raised so that they had a real voice in the governance of the country. Resolution III demanded better administration of excise in the light of the proposals contained in the Lely's Memorandum, Resolution IV urged bestowal of each of the Provinces of India the right to return at least two members to the British House of Commons ; the appointment of not less than three Indian gentlemen of proved ability and experience as the members of the Council of the Secretary of State for India ; the appointment of two Indians as the members of the Viceroy's Executive Council and of one Indian each in the Executive Councils of the Governors of Bombay and Madras. Resolution V demanded that Parliamentary Enquiry Committees be set up periodically to look into the affairs of Indian administration and that the salary of the Secretary of State for India be paid by the British exchequer. Resolution VI repeated the demand of the Congress for the Indianisation of public services. Resolution VII urged reduction in the burden of taxation. Resolution VIII urged cut in military expenditure. Resolution X reiterated the stand of the Congress for separation of executive and judicial functions and recruitment of civil judges from the legal profession.

Resolution XI repeated the demand of the Congress for reforms in the police administration. Resolution XII recorded strong protest of the Congress against the Partition of Bengal

and urged its repeal, or its modification in a way acceptable to the people of Bengal. Resolution XIII recorded emphatic and earnest protest of the Congress against repressive measures of the British Government that forced the people to resort to the boycott of foreign goods. Resolution XIV demanded reforms in the sphere of educational administration. Resolution XV repeated the demand of the Congress for the eradication of poverty. Resolution XVI said that quarantine of five days imposed at the port of Bombay upon the Muslim pilgrims before embarking for Jeddah was unnecessary and vexatious. Resolution XVII demanded that the Punjab be constituted into a Regulation Province and its Legislative Council be reformed in accordance with the provisions of the Indian Councils Act, 1892, and a High Court of Judicature be established there; the C.P. and Berar have the right to elect their representative for the Central Legislative Council. Resolution XVIII appealed to the voters of North Lambeth to support and vote Dadabhai Naoroji for his election to the House of Commons. Resolution XIX thanked Gokhale and Lala Lajpat Rai for the role they played in the discharge of their duties in England. Resolution XX nominated Gokhale to go to England for pleading the cause of the Congress there. Resolution XXI said about the setting up of a Standing Committee consisting of 15 members to promote the objects of the Congress and to take such steps during the year (1906) as were necessary to give effect to its resolutions. Resolution XXII said about the reappointment of Hume as the General Secretary and of Wacha and Gokhale as the Joint General Secretaries of the Congress for the ensuing year. Resolution XXIII thanked Sir William Wedderburn and other members of the British Committee for their selfless services in the cause of India's political advancement. Finally, Resolution XXIV said about the next session to be held at Calcutta on a date after Christmas as decided later.

*The Twenty-Second Session (1906)*

It opened on 26 December and sat for four days. It was attended by 1,663 delegates—686 from Bengal, 262 from



Bombay, 221 from Madras, 187 from the U.P., 160 from the C.P., Berar, Secunderabad, Jaipur, Indore and Bangalore, 139 from the Punjab, and 8 from Burma. Never before such a big assemblage occurred ; never before had the delegates been so evenly distributed as on this occasion. Dr. Rash Behari Ghose delivered the welcome address. After that Raja Pearey Mohan Mukerji proposed and Nawab Syed Mohammed seconded the name of Dadabhai Naoroji for the presidentship and then he took the chair for the third time, earlier at Calcutta in 1886 and then at Lahore in 1893.

### **FAULTS OF PINCHBECK IMPERIALISM\***

Brother Delegates and Countrymen,

As Chairman of the Reception Committee, it is my privilege to welcome you to Calcutta, a city which in many ways presents a strong contrast to Benares where you assembled last year,—that 'sweet city of dreaming spires' plunged in thought and passionately yearning for a higher and truer life than can be found in the things of this world, its pomps, its vanities and its cares. The city of Job Charnock is not, I admit, classic ground. It does not draw our hearts or stir our pulses as Benares does—so rich in historic associations and so lovely even in her desolation. And yet Calcutta is by no means an unfit place for the meeting of the National Congress ; or the life and motion and the many sided activity, the signs of which are all around you, are typical of the new order that has been called into existence by the play and interaction of Eastern and Western ideals which without killing our deep spiritual life,—that precious heritage of every child of the East—have inspired us with a sense of social duty incompatible with a life of cloistered seclusion and pale asceticism. And it is this sense of social duty that has brought together from all parts of India, no longer a mere geographical expression, a band of self-denying men representing the intelligence, the culture and

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\*Address delivered by Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Calcutta session held in December, 1906.

the public spirit of the motherland, fired with the noblest and purest purposes, resolved to do their duty to their country and confident in her destiny. They know that for good or for ill they stand face to face with a new world and must adapt themselves to the environment. They know that the difficulties which now meet them cannot be solved by piety and philosophy alone and that under the new conditions which have arisen, political and social action is essential to our progress as citizens of the British Empire. Calcutta, therefore, is, I repeat, not an unfit place for the discussion of the new problems which have arisen. Indeed in some ways this city with its ceaseless roar and whirl is a fitter place than Benares whose true strength lies not in action but in thought.

The Committee of which I have the honour to be the Chairman consists of representatives of all sections of the community including several Mohammedan gentlemen of light and leading who like the late Mr. Tyabjee, the foremost man among his community in our generation, whose loss is still fresh upon us, believe that their duty to their country is not inconsistent with loyalty to England, I mean true loyalty—the loyalty of the dial to the sun and not that protected loyalty in plush which proclaims itself from the housetops and whenever any person in authority speaks ready to shout : “It is the voice of a God and not of a man.” With the exception of some Nawabs and Khan Bahadurs in the Eastern province who are now weeping like the poor Queen of Carthage for Mr. Joseph Fuller, you will find on the Reception Committee almost all the most prominent men of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Maharajas and Rajas, representatives of ancient houses, elected members of Legislative Councils, of Municipalities and of Local and District Boards, professors and school masters, merchants and traders, doctors, journalists and lawyers are all to be found on its rolls. But you will miss two names which have been associated with the Congress from the very beginning. Woomesh Chander Bannerjee and Anund Mohan Bose have been recently lost to us and we are yet in the fulness of our grief. They fought side by side in the service of their country to which they had dedi-

cated their lives and in death they were not divided. Woomesh Chander Bannerjee stood by the cradle of the National Congress and nurtured and fostered it with parental solicitude and affection. That Congress which may be said in no small measure to owe its very existence to him comes of age today ; but our beloved leader, so wise and valiant, is not with us to partake in our rejoicings. His ashes rest in a foreign land, but a nation's sorrow followed him across the seas to his last resting place in England, the country which next to his own he loved best. In the death of Anund Mohan Bose, everyone felt as if he had lost a personal friend ; for he was of an eminently winning disposition, distinguished not less by his amiability than by the purity of his life. To deep spiritual fervour, he joined a lofty patriotism, working 'as ever in the great Task Master's eye.' Indeed in Anund Mohan Bose patriotism grew to the height of a religion. And it was this happy union of the religious and civic elements in his character that sustained him when, with life fast ebbing away and with the valley of the shadow of death almost in sight, he poured out his soul in that memorable swan-song of the 16th of October, 1905, when a whole people plunged in gloom assembled together in solemn protest against the ruthless dismemberment of their country.

"If," says Cicero, "to his country a man gives all, he becomes entitled to what all money cannot buy,—the eternal love of his fellow men." This is the exceeding great reward of every true patriot and no one can question Anund Mohan's title to it. His death stirred Calcutta to its depth ; and in that vast throng which followed the bier in long and solemn procession every eye was wet with tears, every face was clouded with the shadow of a deep and passionate sorrow.

Our friends have been taken away from us before their work was done. But if the soldier who dies in a forlorn hope has not lived in vain, depend upon it, the lives of Woomesh Chander Bannerjee and Anund Mohan Bose cannot have been wasted as autumn leaves. True, their seats on the platform are vacant ;

true, they can no longer guide our counsels or plead the cause of their country or defend it by tongue and by pen through good report and through evil report. But they have left behind them a lesson which shall not die and an example for all time to inspire and encourage their countrymen—an example which ought to sustain and comfort us, when, as now, we are compassed round by dangers and by darkness. It is an idle fancy or do I really see our departed friends revisiting the scenes of their earthly labours and watching over our deliberations? Yes, there are with us today,—our guardian angels and patron saints whom we may reverence and even worship without offence for such homage and worship, it is not paradox to say, are an ennobling and not a degrading superstition.

Brother delegates, I spoke just now of dangers and of darkness and the tale of our afflictions is a long one. We have been tried by desolating floods and by famine in the very heart of the granary of the Province, a famine in which numbers have died of hunger and slow starvation. Prosperity budgets could not keep them alive nor blue books on the material and moral progress of India nourish them. They died,—men, women, and children—without a murmur on their pale lips and their bones are now whitening the plains of East Bengal, together, I believe, with the copies of Lord Lytton's Famine Commission Report. But even these visitations pale before the political perils by which we are threatened. For we are truly fallen on evil days and on evil tongues; and Bengal at the present moment is a land of many sorrows in which we have been sustained and consoled only by the sympathy of our countrymen.

Our trials commenced with the partition of Bengal, that ill-starred measure of that most brilliant Viceroy who had nothing but gibes and sneers for our aspirations and prayers and who found India comparatively contented and left it fermenting with unrest. The notification of the 16th of October 1905 was the parting gift of Lord Curzon to Bengal—a province for which he always dissembled his love. Now, I do not mean to impute unworthy motives to the author of the dismemberment of our

Province, but he must be a bold man who should say that the separation of East Bengal is not likely to interfere with the collective power of the Bengalees or the growth of our national spirit. He must also be a bold man who should say that it is not a menace to the ascendancy of Calcutta, the centre of political and intellectual activity, in this part of the country. He must again be a bold man who should say that the Mohammedan population in the new Province may not be used as tools by artful and unscrupulous persons to keep in check the growing strength of the educated community ; for religious animosities may be easily kindled among an illiterate people, though not so easily subdued. A division on the basis of territory and population was tried as we all know, by the French Revolutionary Government with the best of intentions but with the most fatal results to the people. They reduced men to loose counters merely for the sake of simple telling, and not to figures whose power is to arise from their places on the table. In the spirit of this geometrical distribution and arithmetical arrangement, these pretended citizens, says Burke, treated France exactly like a conquered country. Acting as conquerors, they imitated the policy of the harshest of that harsh race who condemn a subdued people and insult their feelings. The policy of such barbarians has never been, as much as in them lay, to destroy all vestiges of the ancient country, in religion, in polity, in laws, and in manners ; to confound all territorial limits ; and to lay low everything which had lifted its head above the level, or which could serve to combine or rally, in their distress, the disbanded people, under the standard of old opinion. In a word, they destroyed the bonds of their union, under colour of providing for administrative efficiency. These sentiments may be foolishness to a bureaucracy—'mere tailors of business who cut the clothes but do not find the body,'—and who think that administrative efficiency can only be secured by the 'augmentation of official business, official power and official members,' and of official salaries. But such is not the opinion of the author of the most appreciative life of Burke in our day.

I do not however wish to detain you with the case against the partition of Bengal ; for nobody except possibly G.C.I.E.'s

would now care to defend it. But many of you are probably not aware that the public had no opportunity whatever of discussing the scheme which was finally settled and which fell in our midst like a bolt from the empyrean heights of Simla. Now we may be, as our friends take care to remind us with perhaps needless iteration, hereditary bondsmen with whom the warlike races in India should have no fellowship ; I must confess, though our friends may not believe it, that we do not like to be treated as so many black beetles even by a brilliant Viceroy. But I am perhaps too hard upon Lord Curzon, who probably meant only to surprise us with this touching proof of his interest in our welfare. His Lordship as we all know had a horror of playing to the gallery and loved to do good by stealth, and, I have no doubt, blushed when he found it fame in Printing House Square. But even his best friends now admit that it was a great pity his Lordship did not rest on his laurels when he had solved his twelve problems ;—a highly suggestive number, but I dare say it was a mere coincidence.

We have been told on high authority that the partition of Bengal is "a settled fact" but Mr. Morley keeps an open mind and we refuse to believe that the last word has been said or that the subject will never be re-opened. In the meantime we cannot allow the question to sleep. Unfinished questions, it has been well said, have no pity for the repose of nations. We have been parted from those who are bound to us by the ties of blood, of race, of language and of country, and bound too by the ties of common ends and common aspirations : and the wound which has been thus inflicted on us refuses to heal. The sentiments of the people have been trampled under foot by an autocratic Viceroy : and we owe it not only to ourselves but also to you, our countrymen, to give public expression to our feelings. For behind this deliberate outrage upon public sentiment and closely connected with it, there is a very much larger issue affecting the good government of this country. That issue is nothing more, nothing less than this. Is India to be governed autocratically without any regard to the sentiments and opinion of the people who must be made to know their proper place as

an inferior subject-race or on those enlightened principles which are professed by our rulers ? The question of partition looked at from this point of view involves a trial of strength between the people and the bureaucracy and in that trial, I am sure, we shall have not merely the good wishes but also the active support and sympathy of all our countrymen ; and never were we in greater need of that support and sympathy than at the present moment.

Mr. Morley has told us that, if new facts are placed before him, he will consider his decision. Do not the numerous anti-partition meetings over 250 in number which were held all over Bengal on the 16th of October last in which nearly a million of people, Hindus and Mohammedans, took part show that the ferment created by the measure is not dying out as they are facts which speak for themselves ? These demonstrations were not, they could not have been, the work of 'pestilent agitators, or of the intellectuals, whatever, G.C.I.E.'s may be affected to believe. Many of these meetings were presided over by Mohammedan gentlemen of rank and influence and the great gathering in the Federation Ground in Calcutta had for its chairman my learned and accomplished friend, Moulvi Mahomad Yusuf, Khan Bahadur, the president of the Mohammedan Central Association. When there is such a deep-rooted and wide-spread sentiment, only two courses are possible, coercion or concession. There is no middle course, no halting place and who can deny that the path of concession is also the path of the true wisdom and true statesmanship ? The religious animosities again which have been sedulously fostered in East Bengal since the partition, when the Mohammedans came to appreciate the benevolent intentions of Sir Joseph Fuller, are among the bitter first fruits of that measure, to which also it is impossible for Mr. Morley to shut his eyes or close his heart. I am not a statesman or I should have been a K.C.S.I. by this time writing anonymously to the English Press ; but I can easily foresee how the agitation will gain in volume and strength when the people of East Bengal find themselves living under a different rule and a different system of

laws administered too by men who would gladly exchange places with their more fortunate brethern in the older province. Is then the partition of Bengal a settled fact? By all the hopes within us, we say 'no.' And this is our settled conviction. We know the difficulties by which Mr. Morley is surrounded, but we know also that sympathy is the keynote of his policy; and the statesman who pacified Ireland may be safely trusted yet to pacify Bengal by placing the Bengali speaking districts—under one and the same administration. Grant that our opposition is based on mere sentiment can anybody deny that sentiment plays a most important part in the affairs of mankind?

In Mr. Morley, the philosopher and statesman, the scholar and historian, we have happily a politician who knows the seasons when to take occasion by the hand and who will, I am confident, by timely concessions unite in closer bonds England and her great dependency in the East.

Some of my countrymen, I know, think that in relation to Indian affairs the Liberal is almost as illiberal as the Tory, and they may possibly be right. But of Mr. Morley it cannot be certainly said that he has given to party or class what was meant for mankind. To him the sun-dried bureaucrat is only a bureaucrat and not the very incarnation of wisdom. Nor does he believe in the infallibility of the man on the spot; for his is not one of those minds which are fed by mere phrases.

The partition of Bengal was followed by Russian methods of government with this difference that the officials who devised them were Englishmen, while the Russian official is at least the countryman of those whom he governs or misgoverns. The singing of national songs and even the cry of *Bande Mataram* were forbidden under severe penalties. This ordinance was fittingly succeeded by the prosecution of school boys, the quartering of military and punitive police, the prohibition and forcible dispersion of public meetings and these high handed proceedings attained their crown and completion in the tragedy



at Barisal, when the Provincial Conference was dispersed by the Police who wantonly broke the peace in order, I imagine, to keep the peace. Now, though we are a thoroughly loyal people and our loyalty is not to be easily shaken, because it is founded on a more solid basis than mere sentiment, I have no hesitation in saying that we should be less than men if we could forget the tragedy of that day, the memory of which will always fill us with shame and humiliation. And this leads me to remark that it was not cowardice that prevented our young men from retaliating. It was their respect for law and order—their loyalty to their much reviled leaders that kept them in check.

All this has now happily been put an end to. But as soon as the cloud began to lift, those Anglo-Indians who are obliged to live in this land of regrets merely from a high sense of duty were seized with the fear that their monopoly of philanthropic work might be interrupted and immediately commenced a campaign of slander and misrepresentation which in virulence and mendacity has never been equalled. I.C.S.'s in masks and editors of Anglo-Indian newspapers forthwith began to warn the English people that we were thoroughly disloyal ferretting out sedition with an ingenuity which would have done no discredit of the professors of Laputa.

Cato tells us that the Roman augurs could not look in the another's face without a smile, and I have a shrewd suspicion that the editors and their masked correspondents who joined in this hunt must have exchanged significant glances "across the walnuts and the wine." One Calcutta paper discovered 'Golden Bengal' and told its startled readers that our province was honey combed with secret societies. It seems, however, that with the retirement of that redoubtable Knight Sir Joseph Fuller, things took a more serious turn ; for we then flung all secrecy aside and openly annointed and crowned Baboo Surendra Nath Bannerjee whom I suppose I must no longer call my friend but my Liege Lord as our king. A floral crown, it was said, might be a harmless thing but there must have

been sedition in the folds of the umbrella and this silly story appropriately invented in the silly season which heightened our gaiety in Calcutta seems actually to have frightened hysterical old women in England including some retired Anglo-Indians whose nerves, I fear, have been shattered by an immoderate use of the taxed salt of India. Where so many people distinguished themselves,—reputations, like fortunes, are very easily made by foreigners in India—it might be invidious to mention the name of any particular individual ; but I cannot help thinking that our special acknowledgements are due to Dr. Grierson, the great oriental scholar, who with that charity which thinketh no evil hastened to inform the English press that *Bande Mataram* is an invocation to *Kali*, the goddess of destruction ;—a goddess by the way whose altar will never be deserted as long as the pseudo-imperialism of our day which means nothing more and nothing less than the culture of blood-thirst lasts among the sons of men.

The Swadeshi movement seems also to have given great offence to a certain section of the Anglo-Indian community. They have, they say, every sympathy with the *swadeshi* but none with the *pseudo-swadeshiism* of Bengal. Now, I confess, that though a lawyer of some standing and not perhaps altogether inapt to find distinctions without any difference, I have never been able to discover the line which separates true from false *swadeshi* ; though we all know the difference between true and false sympathy. It seems that if you call the movement a boycott of foreign goods, you are a traitor to England. But competition with Manchester is not yet treason in the Indian Statute Book. It is true the movement received an impetus from the Partition of Bengal, when we wanted to draw the attention of England to what we regarded as nothing less than vivisection, crowning act in a reactionary policy steadily pursued for nearly seven years. But what reasonable man can doubt that the real strength of the *Swadeshi* movement is to be found in our natural desire to nurse our own industries which the Government of India with their free-trade principles are unable to protect by building up a tariff wall. Mere boycotting, we

know, will not bring happiness or wealth to us, or save our hungry masses from what Mr. Bryan calls the peace of the grave. This can only be done by improving the economical conditions of the country, so rich in resource of all kinds, by the creation and diffusion of domestic industries and by the investment of local capital in industrial arts in which India was pre-eminent at one time but which have now almost all been killed by Western competition. The *Swadeshi* movement is only a prelude to our determination to enter into the great brotherhood of the trading nations of the West, without, if possible, the eternal struggle between capital and labour, into which Japan has already been admitted. And if you want to know what progress we have made, come with me to the exhibition on the other side of the street, which I hope you have not boycotted, and I will show you what this movement, the implication of which with politics is a mere accident in Bengal from which some of us would gladly dissociate it, has already done for us. A visit to it, I am sure, will fill the heart of everyone of you with hope and gladness ; for in *Swadeshism* you see the cradle of a New India. To speak of such a movement as disloyal is a lie and calumny. We love England with all her faults but we love India more. If this is disloyalty, we are, I am proud to say, disloyal. But is there a single Englishman who really thinks in his heart that the material progress of the country will loosen the ties which bind us to England ? On the contrary, would it not, by relieving the economical drain on India, bind the two countries closer together.

*Swadeshism*, I need not remind you, is not a new cult. It counted among its votaries almost all thoughtful men long before the division of Bengal and found expression in the Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition held under the auspices of the National Congress in Calcutta in 1901. It does not, I repeat, mean hostility to anything and everything that is British but merely the awakening of an industrial life. The *Swadeshi* movement has been the principal motive power in the industrial development of the country, and I would remind those who

say that Bengal can only talk that in the course of the present year more than ten lacs of rupees have been given by Bengalees for the encouragement of technical education. Our young men are now taking in large numbers to industrial pursuits and are qualifying themselves for their different callings in the national institutions which have been recently opened in Calcutta ; but the most promising feature in the movement is that it has brought the masses and the educated classes together, as it promises to the artisan and labourer some mitigation of the chronic poverty in which they are now steeped. And here I must interrupt myself for a moment to point out that the great assistance which has been rendered to us by Government in organizing our Exhibition shows their friendliness to the *Swadeshi* movement. This action of the government, I am sure, will tend to draw closer the ties which should bind them and the people together ; and their cooperation which has been of the greatest help to us ought to give food for reflection to those who revile Government in season and out of season. It would perhaps be idle to endeavour to convince men who brood only on the old commercial jealousy of England which did not a little to kill Irish and Indian industries. But I may be permitted to point out that they forget that in those days a ruling race did not regard itself as subject to the restraints which now govern its relations with a subject race. It is true the ethical code of Plato is not yet the code of the statesman, but it is now generally acknowledged that to impoverish a subject-race is not only unwise but morally wrong.

I trust I have said enough to satisfy every sane man that we have no idea of driving the English into the sea by our speeches and writings. I am aware that some irresponsible and impulsive journalists and platform speakers have been occasionally betrayed into the use of intemperate language. But is there no excuse for them ? We have been called 'yelping jackals' 'wolves', and 'chattering *bunderlog*' ; and even the Viceroy has been described as a 'nincompoop', and the Secretary of State a 'dummy,' because they would not reduce us to the position of 'whipped curs.' Again one paper which shall be nameless

spoke of the organized scoundrelism of Eastern Bengal and threatened us with gallows and the sword to be used as remorselessly as in the dark days of the mutiny, for the tiger spirit of the editor had been roused. It is true he spoke of the 'tiger spirit of the English,' but natural history does not furnish any instance in which a lion has degenerated into a tiger in India, although such a transformation is not perhaps absolutely impossible. There was not one to speak the fitting word, the word in due season to soothe our bruised hearts.

It would however be idle to deny, and I do not pretend to deny, that a bitter and angry feelings is growing up in the country, but I deny that there is any sedition or disloyalty ; though I am confident that if Lord Curzon's bigamous lieutenant had been allowed to work his will in the Eastern Province, the ferment created by the partition would have reached a critical point. It would be idle to deny, and I do not pretend to deny, that the reactionary policy pursued by the late Viceroy has left behind it a burning sense of helplessness and humiliation and has driven some of my countrymen as yet small in numbers almost mad with indignation. There are, generally speaking, impulsive youngmen of whom I would say nothing harsher than that they seem to me love their country not wisely but too well. But to charge them with open or covert disloyalty is to forget that mere academic discussion is not sedition nor pious opinions a crime. I say pious opinions, because no man out of Bedlam and every few even inside it regard such discussions as falling within the range of practical politics, and the notion that we want the English to clear out immediately, bag and baggage, is too absurd for any credulity but the credulity of those whose conscience has been made them cowards. Our critics should also remember that nations like individuals sometimes lose their heads and that the partition of Bengal is one of those maddening wrongs under which it is not possible for the unhappy sufferers to show prudence and moderation. These qualities should rather be shown by those who have driven a law-abiding people to the very verge of madness. Even the Bengalees cannot be expected always "to hope all

things, to believe all things and endure all things." "But those who have used to cramp liberty," as the author of the Drapier's Letters points out, "have gone so far as to resent even the liberty of complaining; although a man upon the rack was never known to be refused the liberty of roaring as loud as he thought fit."

The men of whom I am speaking have lost all confidence in the good faith of Government and have persuaded themselves that England means to treat India as a mere pawn in her military and diplomatic enterprises, a close preserve for the classes, and a happy hunting ground for the white adventure. They have persuaded themselves that our rulers wish to exclude us for all time from all the higher offices and from all share in the administration of the country; and that it is idle to expect any concessions from them. Look, they say, at Ireland, look at your own country and you will be sick and weary of all the hollow words which have been uttered and all the hollow promises which have been made; for is not the Queen's Proclamation associated only with frustrated hopes and unredeemed pledges? In a word, they have persuaded themselves that our rulers wish to keep us in long clothes in a state of perpetual tutelage. For my part, I decline to believe anything of the kind. But I ask, is there no excuse for the pessimism of those misguided young men whose hearts are sick with hope deferred? Might they not cite in their defence not the irresponsible criticism of 'failed' lieutenant-governors or American and French travellers but the responsible utterances of statesmen like the late Lord Salisbury and of Viceroy's like the late Lord Lytton. Mind I am not going to defend these persons but only endeavouring to account for their bitter attitude towards a government which, whatever may be its errors or short-comings, has conferred untold blessings on the country.

Many things are possible. One thing, however, is to me inconceivable. I can never believe that England will ever retrace her steps or forget her duty to India where she came not

as a conqueror ;—those who speak of the conquest of India by a mere handful of Englishmen cannot have read history which does not record any authentic miracles, where she came I repeat, not, as a conquerer but as a deliverer, with the ready acquiescence of the people, to 'heal and to settle', to substitute order and good government for disorder and anarchy, to fit 'stone to stone again', and restore that edifice which had been slowly and painfully built up by the wisest and best of Indian sovereigns. That task has now been accomplished, white winged peace now broods over the whole land ; and it only remains for England now to fit us gradually for that autonomy which she has granted to her colonies. Then and not till then will the mission of England in India be accomplished and the glorious dreams of Akbar realized ;—a dream which did not, I am sure, issue from the gate of ivory. Then and not till then will the bar-sinister be removed,—that badge of inferiority and subjection which must chafe and gall men who have been nourished on the glorious literature of England,—that literature which as the founder of English education in India justly boasted had taught France the principles of liberty and which must carry with it wherever it spreads a love of British virtues and of British freedom. Great is the destiny of England, but equally great are her responsibilities involving a sacred trust, but I am confident that the august mother of free nations, the friend of struggling nationalities and of emancipation all over the world, will rise to the heights of her duty. Shall Christian England fall below pagan Rome who, in her best days, conquered only to extend the privileges of citizenship to her subjects, investing them with equal rights and equal laws, equally administered ? The Romans were not inspired with the mere lust of conquest or exploitation, nor did they seek empire for new markets for their wares. They were fired by a nobler ideal ; and they had their reward in the gratitude of their contended subjects, which was as a diadem to the Mistress of the World. To England more has been given and of her more will be required. And, depend upon it, she will not disappoint you, for the people to whom the fortunes of our country have been entrusted are generous, if somewhat impassive, and should not be judged by

those Anglo-Indians who regard India as an oyster to be opened with the sword and to whom the Queen's Proclamation is anathema marantha and the National Congress as Frankenstein. Such men, I have no hesitation in saying, are false to their salt, false to their King, and false to their country. But take my word for it, their hostility to the children of the soil, though it may for a time infect the classes in England, will not deceive the great democracy which is fast rising into power. But you must have patience. You must learn to wait and everything will come to you in time. Remember the long and arduous struggle in England before the Catholics were emancipated or the Test Acts were repealed. Remember the great fight which Cobden had to fight for the repeal of the Corn Laws. Remember the public agitation and the ferment before the first Reform Act was passed. Remember too how very slowly the Irish church fell and the long continued agitation before the Irish land laws were reformed and when you hear the English described as a nation of shop-keepers, do not forget that they spent 20 millions to emancipate the slave. Our difficulties are very much greater for we have not only to face class prejudices, but also the prejudices, so hard to die, of race, of religion and of colour, for we are unhappily in every sense aliens. But do not be discouraged, do not despair. There is not the least cause for despondency. Have confidence in yourselves and also in the good faith of England; and do not, I pray you, be led away by the passions of the moment and when you are met by calumnies and lies, console yourselves with the reflection that the just claims for the great body of the English people have been similarly met by the party of the privilege and supremacy and a subservient Press. Remember that in Mr. Morley we have a most sympathetic Secretary of State and in Lord Minto an equally sympathetic Viceroy imbued, if I may say so without impertinence, with a strong sense of justice who, though he may possibly think that some of our aspirations are premature, will not, I am certain, sneer them down or treat them with the levity which cuts deeper than the surgeon's knife or the sword. We have also friends in England who are devoted to our cause. But perhaps



the most hopeful sign is the increased interest which the English public at home are taking in the affairs of this country. The appointment again of Mr. Morrison to the India Council marks a new departure which is full of promise and foreshadows the doom of bureaucracy in India; for the new member is free from the narrowness and excessive self-esteem which are the notes of the bureaucrat who is under the delusion "that the elaborate machinery of which he forms a part and from which he derives his dignity is a grand and achieved result and not a mere working and changeable instrument"; and whose over-weening conceit cannot be cured even by the King of Babylon's famous treatment which was so successful with the satrap Iraj. Mr. Morley is now engaged in digging the grave of bureaucracy; and we can almost hear the thud of the spade and the music, yes, the music of the knell. Brother Delegates! Be of good cheer for, lo, the winter is almost past, the rain is over and gone, and the flowers begin to appear on the earth.

But if the present situation in India calls for the exercise of statesmanship of the highest order, it also calls for the exercise of great moderation on our part. And we are all glad to welcome Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, that tried friend of India, as President of the 22nd Session of the Indian National Congress. Though he has already considerably exceeded the years allotted to man, he accepted our invitation with an alacrity which ought to be a lesson to us all. Age has not withered, the dust of daily life has not choked the courage, energy, enthusiasm, high purpose and self-devotion which have throughout characterised our Grand Old Man. I see many in this assembly distinguished by their zeal and devotion not less than by their ripe wisdom and experience, faithful patriots who have been working for their country with hearts that never failed and courage that never faltered fighting the good fight amid obloquy and sneers, and not unfrequently under the frowns of men in authority. But it is no disparagement to these gentlemen to say that there is not one amongst them who has a greater, a longer, or a more brilliant record than Dadabhai Naoroji. Words are too weak

to express our debt to the man who in his eighty second year has ventured on a long journey to give us at a critical time the benefit of his wise counsel without the hope of any reward other than the consolation which will cheer him in the evening of his days that to the very last he was faithful to his country and to the National Congress. And if it is true that the sunset of life gives us mystic lore, we shall hear from his lips the future destiny of the country he loves so well and for which he has at our invitation risked everything—ease, health, nay, life itself. He will tell us not to despair but to confine in the honesty and good faith of England. He will tell us that a great Empire and mean thinking go ill together and that the pinchbeck imperialists who think that Kipling is greater than Shakespeare or Milton and who can explain away the Queen's Proclamation do not represent either the best intelligence or the conscience of England.

I said pinchbeck imperialists, for imperialism in its best and trust sense does not mean privileges and supremacy but good government and equal rights. It was this spirit which inspired Chatham when he pleaded for the better government of India and Ireland. It was this spirit which sustained Burke in that famous trial which has made his name familiar as a household word in India. It was this imperial spirit which inspired Palmerston when he thrilled the heart of England with the proud boast that as the Roman in the days of old held himself free from indignity when he could say *Civis Romanus Sum*, so also a British subject, in whatever land he may be, shall feel confident that the watchful eye and the strong arm of England will protect him against injustice and wrong. It was this spirit which inspired Gladstone in our day when he sought to redress the wrongs of Ireland. It was this spirit which inspired Bright when he pleaded for the better government of India. But the pinchbeck imperialism which is fast going out of fashion in England is made up of barbarous ambitions, passions and sentiments wholly alien to the culture and civilization of the twentieth century. To these brummagem imperialists I would say : Do not misread the signs of the times ; Do not be deluded

by theories of racial inferiority. The choice lies before you between a contented people proud to be the citizens of the greatest empire the world has ever seen and another Ireland in the East or, I am uttering no idle threat, I am not speaking at random for I know something of the present temper of the rising generation in Bengal, perhaps another Russia. To my mind, but the witty Mr. Macleod who, I believe, is not a countryman of Oliver Cromwell, will say it is impossible for a Bengalee to think imperially, to my mind the choice is not difficult to make, and I am confident every true son of England who is jealous of the honour of his country, will make the better choice. Indeed, though certain recent events might seem to belie it he made that choice long ago ; for he knows that though the world is indebted for many things to England, the true home of free institutions, her best title to glory will be, the words are familiar to every school boy in India, that she has so ruled people once great as to have made them desirous and capable of all the privileges of citizens. I have also a word of warning and counsel for some of my younger countrymen. I would say to them in the words of Marcus Aurelius : "Hope not for the republic of Plato ; but be content with ever so small an advance, and look on even that as a gain worth having," and I beseech them, though they may be goaded to madness by abuse and slander, not to be betrayed into an attack on the honour or good faith of England for as our present Secretary of State tells us in his Life of Gladstone though the plain people of England are inspired by a sense of fair play which is indeed ingrained in the English character, they will refuse even the shadow of a concession, if you assail the greatness or integrity of their country.

Brother Delegates! Allow me before I sit down to repeat my welcome and to express our sense of the honour you have done us by accepting our hospitality. You have no doubt heard a good deal of our internal dissensions which our enemies have artfully tried to inflame. But I can assure you that whatever may be our differences, it does not affect the cordiality of our welcome to you, our friends and countrymen, who have man-

fully stood by us in our trials as brothers should be brother, to the discomfiture and confusion of those who have sought to set class against class, race against race, and religion against religion. These men have failed. They were bound to fail, because great but silent forces are at work which no earthly power or, I will not use the epithet which rises to my lips but merely say, human cunning can arrest. A national life has commenced which is growing more and more vigorous every day and this great assembly in which every province is represented is the best answer to those who still have the hardihood to assert that India is a mere geographical expression. It is said that our country is a mere medley of races, of religious and opposing interests and that the only tie which binds the Maharatta and the Madrassi, the Sikh and the Bangalee, is that of common obedience to their Rulers. But the same thing used to be said of Germany and Italy but both have now become great and powerful nations. Whether the same good fortune awaits us is in the lap of the gods. But the men of England, rely upon it, will never knowingly attempt to avert or delay it by even a single day.

To those who say that our aspirations are premature, my answer is the ideal is not bound by time and that life itself would be an idle tale without meaning, if we were not sustained by the hope of leaving our country better than we found it. In the words of a living English writer who calls himself ameliorist : "Without ideals there would be no hope, and without hope, neither religion, nor aspiration, nor energy, nor good work. A true ideal is no dream, nor idle fantasy. It is the justification of study, and the motive of all useful endeavour." *Bande Mataram.*

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In this session 17 resolutions were passed. Resolution I expressed profound grief at the death of W.C. Bonnerjee, Badruddin Tyabjai, A.M. Bose and M. Veeraraghavachariar. Resolution II demanded ban on the harassing and degrading restrictions on British Indian community in all British colonies.

Resolution III desired cut in the military expenditure. Resolution IV repeated the demand of the Congress for separation of executive and judicial functions. Resolution V said that the decision of the Privy Council against the validity of the wakf-i-ala-aulad was against the Muslim Law and for this purpose demanded the setting up of a Legal Commission to review it. Resolution VI repeated the stand of the Congress on the issue of Partition of Bengal. It said :

“Resolved that this Congress again records its emphatic protest against the Partition of Bengal, and regrets that the present Government, while admitting that there were errors in the original plan, and that it went wholly and decisively against the wishes of the majority of the people of Bengal, is disposed to look upon it as a settled fact, in spite of the earnest and persistent protest of the people, and their manifest disinclination to accept it as final ;

That this Congress, composed of representatives from all the Provinces of this country, desires earnestly to impress upon the British Parliament and the present Liberal Government that it will be not only just, but expedient, to reverse or modify the Partition in such a manner as to keep the entire Bengali-speaking community under one undivided administration, and thus restore contentment to so important a Province as Bengal.”

Resolutions VII, VIII, IX, X and XI have an importance of their own in signifying the growing hold of the Extremists on the organisation as a result of which even the Moderates revised their stand on the issues of boycott, swadeshi, self-government and national education. Resolution VII said :

“Resolved that having regard to the fact that the people of this country have little or no voice in its administration, and that their representations to the Government do not receive due consideration, this Congress is of opinion that the Boycott movement inaugurated in Bengal, by way of protest against the partition of that province was, and is, legitimate.”

Resolution VIII said :

“Resolved that this Congress accords its most cordial support to the *Swadeshi* movement, and calls upon the people of the country to labour for its success, by making earnest and sustained efforts to promote the growth of indigenous industries and to stimulate the production of indigenous articles by giving them preference over imported commodities even at some sacrifice.”

Resolution IX said :

“Resolved that this Congress is of opinion that the system of Government obtaining in the self-governing British Colonies should be extended to India, and that, as steps leading to it, it urges that the following reforms should be immediately carried out :

- (a) All examinations held in England only should be simultaneously held in India and in England, and that all higher appointments which are made in India should be by competitive examination only ;
- (b) The adequate representation of Indians in the Council of the Secretary of State and the Executive Council of the Viceroy, and of the Governors of Madras and Bombay ;
- (c) The expansion of the Supreme and Provincial Legislative Councils, allowing a larger and truly effective representation of the people and a larger control over the financial and executive administration of the country ;
- (d) The powers of local and municipal bodies should be extended and official control over them should not be more than what is exercised by the Local Government Board in England over similar bodies.”

Resolution X said :

"Resolved that this Congress repeats its protest against the policy of the Government in respect of higher and secondary education, as being one of officialising the governing bodies of the Universities, and restricting the spread of education. The Congress is of opinion that the Government should take immediate steps for (1) making Primary Education free and gradually compulsory all over the country ; (2) assigning larger sums of money to Secondary Education (special encouragement being given, where necessary, to educationally backward classes) ; (3) making the existing Universities more free from official control, and providing them with sufficient means to take up the work of teaching ; and (4) making adequate provision for Technical Education in the different Provinces, having regard to local requirements."

Resolution XI said :

"Resolved that in the opinion of this Congress the time has arrived for the people all over the country earnestly to take up the question of National Education for both boys and girls and organise a system of Education—Literary, Scientific and Technical—suited to the requirements of the country, on national lines and under national control."

Resolution XII thanked Sir William Wedderburn and other members of the British Committee for their disinterested services in the cause of India's political advancement. Resolution XIII condoled the sudden death of Rt. Hon. Samuel Smith. Resolution XIV desired cut in the land tax for the relief of the agriculturists. Resolution XV thanked Gokhale for his eminent public services during his visit to England as the Congress Delegate. Resolution XVI was related to the Congress Constitution. It said :

"Resolved that this Congress adopts tentatively for one year the following recommendations of the Standing Committee of the Congress appointed at Benares last year :

### 1. *Provincial Congress Committees*

- (a) The Committee recommends that each Province should organise at its Capital, a Provincial Congress Committee in such manner as may be determined at a meeting of the Provincial Conference or at a special meeting, held for the purpose of representatives of different districts in the Province.
- (b) The Provincial Congress Committee should act for the Province in all Congress matters and it should be its special care to organise District Associations throughout the Province for sustained and continuous political work in the Province.

### 2. *Central Standing Congress Committee*

The Committee recommends that the Congress should appoint every year a Central Standing Committee for all India to carry out the Resolutions of the Congress, and to deal with urgent questions that may arise and which may require to be disposed of in the name of the Congress, and that this Committee should consist of :

12 members from	Bengal, Behar, Assam and Burma
8    "    "	Madras
8    "    "	Bombay
6    "    "	United Provinces
6    "    "	Punjab
4    "    "	Central Provinces
2    "    "	Berar

the President of the year and the General Secretaries being *ex-officio* members in addition.

### 3. *Selection of President*

In the matter of the selection of President in future years, the Committee recommends that the following scheme should be adopted :



The Provincial Congress Committee of the Province in which the Congress is to be held should organise a Reception Committee in such manner as it deems proper for making arrangements for the Congress Session, and the choice of the President should, in the first instance, rest with the Reception Committee, if, after consulting Provincial Congress Committees, the Reception Committee is able to make the choice by a majority of at least three-fourths of its members. If, however, no such majority can be obtained to support the nomination of any person, the question should be referred to the Central Standing Committee of the Congress, and the decision of this Committee should be final.

#### 4. *Subjects Committee*

The Committee recommends that the Subjects Committee, appointed at each Session of the Congress to settle its programme of work, should consist of :

25 representatives of	Bengal, Behar, Assam and Burma
15     "     "	Madras
15     "     "	Bombay
10     "     "	United Provinces
10     "     "	Punjab
6     "     "	Central Provinces
4     "     "	Berar

and 10 additional members for the Provinces in which the Congress is held, elected by the delegates attending the Congress from the respective Provinces in such manner as they may deem proper : and that the President of the year, the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the year, all ex-Presidents and all ex-Chairmen of Reception Committees who may be present at the Congress, the General Secretaries of the Congress, and the local Secretaries of the Congress for the year, should, in addition, be *ex-officio* members of the Subjects Committee."

Finally, Resolution XVII fixed the next annual session at Nagpur.

*The Twenty-third Session (1907 and 1908)*

The modest victory of the Extremists at the Calcutta Congress made them bold to move ahead with a view to capture its leadership. At the Calcutta Congress they had a desire to have Tilak as the President, but they withdrew their move when the Old Guards managed to bring in Naoroji as a compromise candidate. As decided there, the next session was to be held at Nagpur. However, as the Moderates feared that Tilak had much influence over this city, the venue was shifted to Surat—a city known as Mehta's pocket borough.' This time, the Extremists desired to have Lala Lajpat Rai as the President and since it could not happen, they did not appreciate that a known Moderate like Dr. Rash Behari Ghose be the head of the organisation. The session opened on 26 December 1907 and abruptly came to an end the next day on account of disturbances in the pandal created by the Extremists. The adjourned session was held at Madras on 28-30 December, 1908 and then the proceedings could be finalised. At the Surat session Tribhovandas Malvi delivered the welcome address. Thereafter Dr. Ghose delivered the Presidential address. At the Madras session K. Krishnaswami Rao delivered the welcome address and the President read out another address. The Surat session was attended by about 1,600 delegates. According to available figures, the Madras session was attended by 626 delegates—404 from Madras, 134 from Bombay, 36 from United Bengal, 23 from U.P., 18 from the C.P. and Berar, 7 from the Punjab and 4 from Burma.

**THE MOTTO OF LOYALTY, MODERATION,  
FIRMNESS AND UNITY\***

Brother-Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I consider it an inestimable privilege to have this opportunity of offering to you from my fellow-citizens of Surat most sincere and cordial greetings of welcome to this city on the occasion of the 23rd Session

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\*Address delivered by Tribhovandas Malvi, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Surat Congress held in December, 1907.

of the Indian National Congress. My fellow-citizens, let me assure you, consider this assemblage in their midst of Indian brothers coming from all parts of the country belonging to all religions and creeds to be the greatest honour to themselves and their old historic, but now fallen, city. They welcome you in words as well as by deeds from the bottom of their hearts. Such a gathering is an unparalleled event in the annals of this city, replete as it is with memories of its past. This year has been one of exceptional good fortune for Surat, inasmuch as it has been honoured by the sittings of the Provincial Conference as well as by those of this larger and more important body. This city was once so prosperous and rich and so famous and well-known, that it had almost become a synonym for the whole of our country in the countries of Europe in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Our city was at one time the Gate of Entrance for Europeans into India, just as Bombay the *urbs primus in india* now is, and the Surat of yore, can justly be said to have been in early times the predecessor of the present capital of the Presidency in its manifold prosperity. Ours was the first city in India which foreign merchants and travellers of all nationalities visited during their tours through India. At least no merchant or traveller ever thought of returning to his home from India unless he had paid a visit to our city. All European powers of importance in the times of the Great Moghul in India had considered it worth their while to have their factories in our city, and it is on the land where the French Government had once their factory that we meet today. Our city was the first in India to have a factory of our Rulers in its midst and in the present fulness of the glory and the prosperity of the British Empire in India, the inhabitants of Surat cannot help recalling to their minds the fact of their city being the cradle of the British Empire in the East. And now, gentlemen, the citizens of Surat will remember in future the fact of the wise men from all parts of India having condescended to select our city as the most suitable place this year for their annual conclave to deliberate upon the ways and the means of securing a steady reform of the Government of the

country, and continued usefulness for their national movement.

The tide of fortune, however, soon changed with Surat as it does with everything in nature. When the great Mahratta warrior and founder of the Mahratta Empire, Shivaji Maharaj was attempting to wrest the Indian Empire from the Moghuls and establish a Hindu Empire in India in its stead, this city happened to be under Moghul rule, and its very prosperity and fame became one of the chief causes of its ruin. Surat was the first to attract Shivaji's attention as a Moghul possession in Western India worth having, and he invaded it on no less than three occasions. During the invasions we did not escape the usual pillage and damage at the hands of the invaders, but as the trade of the city continued to be prosperous owing to the favourable situation of its port, the pillage of its stored wealth could not affect the condition of the city and its inhabitants in any appreciable degree. A rival port was, however, coming into existence in the Konkan, and it was destined to play an important part in the downfall of Surat, to rise from the ashes of Surat as it were to appropriate to itself all the glories and grandeur and to be its successor as the first city in Western India. It is well-known history that the Island of Bombay was presented to the English King Charles II by the Portuguese King as part of the dowry of his daughter Catherine who was married to the English King. The Island had a fine harbour, in fact owed its very name Bombay to the situation of its harbour. The East India Company had their eyes turned to the Island long before the acquisition thereof by the English King. They thought that, if they got Bombay, it would be the most convenient and central place of safety from which they could keep a careful watch over their possessions and trade on the Western Coast of India and in the interior.

Soon after the English King got it, the East India Company began to negotiate for its transference to themselves from the Crown and within half a dozen years succeeded in securing a lease of the Island from the Crown. Gerald Aungier, who was

then the Governor of Bombay and is regarded as the founder of Bombay, transferred the seat of Government from Surat to Bombay, and this event marks the second stage in the downward course of the fortunes of the city. With the transfer of the seat of the Company's Government most of the foreign trade of the city was also gradually transferred to the rising city. Reverses after reverses followed, the Empire of the Great Moghul was completely annihilated by the British, Surat itself was taken by the British and was thenceforward reduced to the position of a minor city under the Governor of Bombay. The manufactures of silk, brocade and other embroidery work as well as the art of wood-engraving which were until then carried on by the artisans of Surat on a very large scale and had enjoyed a reputation all their own, had to give way before cheap European goods and gradually dwindled into obscurity. The last century has been the worst. It has been an almost unbroken record of fires and floods, famines and plague, and it has seen the complete ruin of the city which had commenced with its invasion by Shivaji. As our great Poet of Surat sings, these fires and floods have disfigured and destroyed the Golden Beauty of Surat. During the last 12 years Surat has also had its fair share of the dire calamities of famine and plague, which are impoverishing and devastating, it may be said, almost the whole of India. Plague this year left us only about a month ago, and what might probably turn out to be one of the worst famines on record is now staring us in the face.

The inhabitants of Surat, though now depleted of their past wealth and deprived of their historic fame and grandeur by misfortune, and passing as they have been, through times for troubles and anxiety, have still retained their pristine notions of hospitality. Surat has been for long anxious for the honour which is now somewhat tardily conferred on her. After the Session at Ahmedabad five years ago, she had made up her mind to secure the privilege as soon as possible, and the Congress was appealed to in Calcutta last year to hold its present Sessions here, but a more favoured candidate was then in the field, and Surat had to give way. Providence had, however,

ruled otherwise, and our offer was repeated and accepted only a month ago.

The earnestness and sincerity of the people of Surat will best be judged by the preparations made by them in the exceedingly short time at their command. We have tried our best and strained every nerve to make their usual necessary preparations to receive and serve our countrymen. We are conscious of the shortcomings in our preparations, and for one thing want of time has prevented us from providing for the Exhibition which has been a very instructive and useful accompaniment of the Congress Sessions for the last half-a-dozen years. I fully trust and hope, however, that it will be seen that we had very little time to cope with our work, and I dare say our Indian brothers will find sufficient compensation for our omissions in our manner and we earnestly appeal to our brothers to accept our hospitality with all its defects in the spirit in which it is offered.

Gentlemen, the Congress has now completed the 23rd year and is already, so to say, in the full flush of youth. Taking a retrospective view of its past career, we find that it has done much to fulfil its mission and to realize the expectations formed by its founders of the good to result from it. Within a few short years after its birth, it exhibited within itself signs of vitality, stability and permanence which astonished and upset its most adverse and virulent critics. As was expected, it was for several years a red rag to many Anglo-Indian bureaucrats. They attacked it in season and out of season, with reason and without reason. Their self-interest was seriously menaced by the movement, and they left no stone unturned to discredit it. All sorts of fanciful charges were levelled against it. It was urged that the British Government was perfect, and there was no need of the existence of such a body to suggest improvements in its policy. It was also stated that the Congress was only made up of a microscopic minority of Hindu lawyers in the country, and a sprinkling of some Parsis, wanting to come into prominence by hook or by crook, and to secure for themselves some of the

loaves and fishes within the gift of the Government. It was accused not only of harbouring impracticable and chimerical views about Government but also of deliberately putting forward impossible demands.

In some quarters, hints were also thrown out that the movement was seditious and subversive of the British Government. Hostile feelings towards the Congress were roused even among a section of the Indians themselves, and matters were carried so far that a counter-movement to support the bureaucracy was actually set on foot. Nothing daunted, however, the institution has gone on working and has survived all criticisms and attacks and has grown up and flourished, thanks to the foresight and the good sense of the patriotic helmsmen steering its ship through these storms ! Their deliberations and resolutions bore on the very face of them marks of sobriety and moderation, usefulness and practicability, necessity and importance, and last though not least, complete unity and harmony among the men taking part therein. The counter-movement was found to be such a weakling that it could not live for any appreciable length of time and had to be carried to the grave in its infancy. The critic, of the Congress, both Indian and Anglo-Indian, were then forced to retreat from the position they had taken up, and began reluctantly and slowly to admit its usefulness if not its importance and necessity. It was now admitted that the movement had not its origin in the ambition or avarice of briefless Hindu lawyers but that Indians of all religions and creeds, professions and occupations, took part in its meetings and conducted their proceedings with unanimity, and that it was the Indian National Congress not merely in name, but in reality also. It also began gradually to dawn upon the members of the bureaucracy that there was some meaning after all in the annual complaints of these "agitators" that some of the defects alleged by them did exist in the administration carried on by the "infallible" British administrators, and that there was room for improvement therein on the lines suggested by the *Congress-wallahs*. The claims of the Congress to the sympathy and support of the Rulers of India have been steadily coming to be

recognised more and more by the British public and even the British Parliament. Retired civilians and members of Parliament like Sir William Wedderburn and Sir Henry Cotton have thought it an honour to accept the Presidentship of the Congress Sessions. Even those Members of Parliament who had not even so much as seen in India before, like the late Mr. Bradlaugh, or like Mr. Keir Hardie and our present guest, Dr. Rutherford, have made no secret of their sympathies with the movement, and have openly advocated its cause. Some of them have even undertaken the trouble and the expense of a voyage to India simply for the purpose of attending the Congress. Thus Mr. Bradlaugh had come out in 1889 for the special purpose of attending the Congress presided over by Sir William Wedderburn, and Dr. Rutherford now attends as a delegate from our British Committee.

The Congress thus has not only succeeded in securing a recognition of its character, but, besides, several of its demands have had to be conceded, and its resolutions acted upon, by our Rulers. One of the most prominent changes introduced by our Rulers in the system of administration of the Government in this country in consequence of our annual meetings and annual resolutions was the expansion of the Legislative Councils in 1892. It is well known how in the past the non-official members of the Legislative Councils were at times mere non-entities nominated by Government and what part favouritism played in such nominations ! Some of the nominated members knew very little of the language in which the proceedings were conducted, and in voting invariably sided with the official members. Instead of this, we have now some members elected by the people, who are in every way qualified and competent to represent their constituents as regards their aims and desires and their difficulties and grievances, who are fully capable of forming independent judgements of their own as to what is best in the interest of the country, and who are perfectly unfettered in giving their votes. A scheme to further enlarge the Council and to constitute Advisory Councils is at present on the anvil, but it is not for me to enter at present into a detailed considera-



tion of this subject. The scheme forms one of the items of deliberation, this Session and will be fully discussed by abler gentlemen later on. Suffice it to say that the Government have deemed it advisable to recognise the necessity of further improving the Councils, though the proposals drafted are, as they stand, of a most disappointing character. Another important reform urged by the Congress year after year is the separation of the Judicial and the Executive functions, and it has recently been announced that the Secretary of State has resolved to try in some parts of the country an experimental measure of that reform.

An important concession has been made in regard to the Council of the Secretary of State for India. The right of Indians to seats in the Council has been recognised, and two Indians have already been appointed as members. The advocacy of the Congress for an advance in the direction of local self-government has resulted in that subject being entrusted to the Royal Commission on Decentralisation for inquiry. The Madras and Bengal Governments have thought it worth their while to inaugurate a system of consulting non-official members before framing their budgets, and I trust other Local Governments, as also the Government of India, will imitate their example. We have also succeeded in getting the incidence of taxation lightened in some cases, *e.g.*, the reduction of the salt tax to less than half of what it formerly was and the raising of the limit of taxable incomes under the Income-Tax Act from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000 per annum.

These results are not to be altogether despised. But what is of more importance is that the Congress has now attained to a position of considerable influence and weight with the Government, both here and in the United Kingdom. Only the other day, the London *Times*, the most Conservative and Imperialistic Journal in the British Isles, thought it necessary to admit this fact, though somewhat unwillingly, and referred to the Congress in terms which, having regard to its general attitude towards Indians, must be regarded as appreciative.

The Congress has not only to maintain the present position and prestige it has acquired, but, as time goes on, to acquire fresh weight and influence. A great many more and important things have yet to be done for India in order to secure to her the full benefit of the privileges promised to her people by her late lamented Majesty Queen Victoria, in her memorable Proclamation of 1858. In achieving this end, the weight and influence of this body will be of very great use and help to the Indians. It must not be forgotten that this weight and influence has been acquired in the past by the exercise of moderation, firmness, and unity in the expression of its aims and desires, and the conduct of its deliberations. It is, therefore, incumbent on all true patriots of India, to maintain and strengthen the Congress and its reputation and position by persevering in the same policy of moderation, firmness and unity which have stood us in good stead and proved so beneficial. Any departure from this track may involve us in difficulties of which few can have any real idea. Those who have been forced to abandon their hostile attitude towards the Congress are on the alert, and will, on the least sign of any departure from the old policy of the Congress, resume their former attempts to strangle it and if the mischief is once done, it will be very difficult, perhaps impossible also, to repair it afterwards. Differences of opinion there will exist, as they must, but, in the interest of national unity, it is necessary to keep them from going beyond a certain limit.

Since the Congress met last year, we have passed through very troublous times indeed. Eminent Indians have been seriously suspected of and charged with the highest offences against the State, *viz.*, exciting sedition, rioting and the like in most cases without justification. Somehow the idea became prevalent among the ruling class that the present year being the 50th year of the Indian Mutiny, Indians were preparing for a similar revolt, and a sort of panic seized them. To check this imaginary revolt, all sorts of repressive and reactionary measures were taken. Old and obsolete enactments, of the existence whereof even no one dreamed, were brought into requisition

for the purpose of punishing people for undefined offences assumed to have been committed without giving any notice to the victims of the charges laid at their doors or giving them an opportunity of meeting these charges. The people in certain localities were assumed to harbour treasonable intentions and meetings were prohibited in those districts, at first for a time, and we have now a very dangerous statute, in the shape of the Seditious Meetings Act, capable of general application throughout the country by a notification in the *Government Gazette*, thrust upon us.

No one deplotes these incidents of the past 12 months more than ourselves, and we should not be doing our duty to our countrymen, if assembled as we are in our representative National Congress, we omitted to take notice of these deplorable events, and you will no doubt consider how best we are to give expression to our feelings and opinions in this matter. Any reactionary policy on the part of the Government is bound to cause irritation, which can be allayed by a resort to conciliation, and we ought to tell the Governments so. Our countrymen on their side also owe a duty in this respect to themselves and to the Government. It is their duty to keep their heads perfectly cool and steady in such times, and to take all reasonable care that their representations and comments in expressing their disapproval of questionable measures do not give ground for any suspicion of a seditious movement lurking behind.

A great calamity is just now staring us in the face. Providence seems somehow to be against us, and the failure of the September rains and the complete holding off of the monsoons since the middle of August threatens with a failure of the kharif as well as the rabi crops this year almost throughout India. The country has been unfortunately, for about 10 years last, suffering from famines and droughts almost every third year. Past famines have already prostrated the poorer sections of the people, and especially the poor agriculturists, and how they will face this famine is a very difficult problem. The land tax, especially in the Bombay Presidency, presses very heavily on the poor. The Government must be appealed to for the

adoption of liberal policy, the opening of relief works, making of advances to poor agriculturists, and the refunds and remissions of revenue. The people are totally unable to provide against the impending famine, and unless a liberal and sympathetic policy is extended to them, the end of the year will see a heavy mortality and devastation of large arable lands. We have had, however, during all our troubles of the year one great consolation for which we cannot be too thankful to Providence. Our Grand Old Man the nestor of Indian politicians, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, has recovered from his somewhat alarming illness and I trust that an earnest and fervent prayer from every one present here will go up that the Great Dispenser may spare him to us for a long time to come to assist and bless us in our work. Even in his present old age the old man is actively striving for our country, and it is no exaggeration to say that it will be impossible for us to find an equal to him.

We have seen how we have succeeded in eliciting a favourable consideration of a great many of our representations in the past, by making them firmly and unanimously and in a spirit of complete loyalty and absolute moderation. It would be simply presumptuous on my part to say anything about the future policy of the Congress, but, in my humble opinion, if the same policy is pursued we should meet with a similar success in the future and that a departure from such lines would be exceedingly disastrous. Loyalty, moderation, firmness and unity in all our deliberations, resolutions and representations should be our mottoes and we cannot keep them too much in sight.

I again tender to you a warm and hearty welcome on behalf of the Reception Committee and the inhabitants of Surat and request you to proceed with the business of the Session. The Hon'ble Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, the eminent lawyer of Calcutta and member of the Council of the Governor-General, who is so well-known all over the country, has been designated President of the Sessions passed at the last Sessions, and he has kindly accepted the post. His election will have to be formally pro-

posed and seconded before he takes the chair, and I request Dewan Bahadur Ambalal Desai to put the formal proposition before the meeting.

### **MEANING OF CONSTITUTIONAL AGITATION\***

Hon'ble Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Reception Committee, I most cordially welcome you to this session of the Indian National Congress. I cannot adequately express my thankfulness to the Committee for the honour they have done me in entrusting me with the pleasant duty of welcoming on this great occasion, a large number of educated, intelligent and public spirited gentlemen devoted to the cause of the peaceful regeneration of India. You have come from different and distant parts of India, in obedience to the call of your mother-country, to take part in the deliberations of this august assembly, at a great sacrifice and inconvenience to yourselves. Within the short time at their disposal and amidst many difficulties, the Reception Committee have spared no pains to make satisfactory arrangements for your stay among us. But they regret that they have not been able to accord you a more fitting reception. They however feel certain that you will kindly take their will for the deed and overlook any shortcomings in the arrangements made for your convenience and comfort.

We are meeting this year under peculiar circumstances. The ever-regrettable incidents that prevented the holding of the last session of the Congress are still fresh in our memory. Although 12 months have now elapsed, there has not been effected that complete union which results from calm and dispassionate deliberation that generally follows sudden outbursts of temper. To wait to summon this session of the Congress until all the differences are adjusted, would mean its long, if not, indefinite

\*Address delivered by K Krishnaswami Rao at the resumed Congress session at Madras in December, 1908.

postponement. Then differences that exist are not, after all, a great evil. They may be taken as a blessing in disguise if they act as a stimulus for us to work in the cause of our country with zeal and earnestness.

During the last two years, many remarkable events have occurred and several important legislative and administrative measures have been introduced. On these measures, which relate to our vital interests, the deliberate and collective opinion of the leaders of Indian thought in different parts of this great Peninsula has to be pronounced. The Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State for India has proposed important reforms which call for our careful consideration and for the expression of our views. They are conceived in a liberal spirit and may be taken as a substantial instalment of reform. These proposals mark, as His Lordship himself has observed, "the opening of a very important Chapter in the history of the relation between Great Britain and India." Even more than the actual proposals, the spirit that dominates them is welcome. We cannot be too grateful to his Lordship whose masterhand is visible in every important detail of the proposals, for the broadminded sympathy with our aspirations and ambitions and for the assurance that an era of progressive administration is to be inaugurated wherein the people will have real voice in the management of their own concerns. The doing away with the official majority in the Provincial Councils, is a distinct and liberal concession to responsible public opinion and has removed an incubus whose existence always gave an air of unreality and formality to the discussions in the Legislative Councils. Next comes the power intended to be conferred on the Councils to pass resolutions in the form of recommendations, on administrative matters, for the consideration of Government. The responsibility which a Government incurs by lightly disregarding the recommendations made by a regularly constituted body is by no means small. The proposed admission of an Indian Member to the Executive Councils is a most important step, the results of which are bound to be abiding and far-reaching. There is much to be said in favour of

the proposals regarding the discussion of the budget in Councils, Electoral Colleges, improvement of Local Fund Boards and Municipalities. But I feel that I should not take up your time with a detailed consideration of them, as they will form the subject of your deliberations.

Ever since he came to the India Office, Lord Morley has been trying his best to understand us and advance the cause of Indian progress. He has given signal proof of his sincere sympathy with our aspirations, by appointing two of our countrymen as his Councillors, and in this Presidency the Hon'ble Mr. Sivaswami Aiyar and the Hon'ble Mr. Abdur Rahim as Advocate-General and Second Indian Judge of the High Court of Madras, respectively. While he found it necessary to sanction certain repressive measures in the paramount interests of peace and order, he has taken care to see that their operation was confined to the gravest of cases and to certain disturbed areas, and that the new powers are exercised with moderation. It is the first duty of Government to preserve peace and order ; and if in meeting such responsibility, they take strong measures, we are bound to give them such united and whole-hearted support as lies in our power. There may be differences of opinion as to what is the best method of dealing with the anarchical development in the country ; but as to the necessity of putting it down by a strong hand, there can be none. The creation of a special bench of 3 Judges of the High Court to try certain classes of grave offences, and the limitation of the Seditious Meetings' Act to a period of 3 years evidence the strong desire of the Government to respect the liberty of the subjects, as far as the circumstances within their knowledge permitted. The proposed reforms bear testimony to their generosity in dealing with Indian problems.

The philanthropic gentlemen who constitute the Indian party in the House of Commons and who have magnanimously made our cause their own, will be very anxious to know that we collectively think of the proposed reforms. I seriously ask Indians of all shades of opinion whether the formation and expression of collective and authoritative opinion, is possible:

without meeting in Congress. We have already lost the opportunity of giving early expression to our views on the events of 1907, by the lamentable disruption of the Surat Session of the Congress. "Better late than never" may be a good rule in the ordinary concerns of life. But in politics, "delay is dangerous." Belated expression of opinion is worse than silence. No Government whatever be its constitution, likes to recall the measures once sanctioned by it, lest its prestige for sound judgement and firmness may suffer. No opportunity should therefore be lost to organise and give an early expression to public opinion on the proposed measures. It is the duty of those who have faith in constitutional agitation, to see that the Sessions of Congress are regularly held and that the opinion of the whole country is recorded in good time.

A section of our countrymen taunt us as the followers of a mendicant policy, by which name they describe constitutional agitation. Constitutional agitation is nothing but the exercise of the subjects' right of petitioning the Sovereign, which the British Nation (the first among the free nations of the world) obtained after a long struggle, and values as one of its best privileges. Our highest ambition has been and is to be placed on a par with European British subjects in every respect. We need not therefore be ashamed of exercising the right of petitioning the Government for redress of our grievances and for the acquisition of fresh rights and privileges. No Government (Native or Foreign) has ever granted privileges or conceded rights, unasked. Even a mother, the dearest of relations, does not anticipate all the wants of her child. So long as we have our wants and so long as we have our aspirations, we must ask our rulers to help us. Is it possible under any Government to obtain redress without appealing to the governing body, by whatever name it may be called? We have no grounds to say that in the past, our representatives received no consideration from Government. The increased employment of our countrymen in the higher ranks of public service, the reforms in the Legislative Councils, the experiment now being made in Bengal



to separate the Judicial from the Executive Service, the reduction of the duty on salt and the raising of the minimum of taxable incomes may be mentioned among the measures introduced in response to Indian opinion. There is, no doubt, a very keen feeling that Government have not moved as fast as our intellectual and moral progress warrants ; but we cannot say that they have stood still. The present attitude of the Indian and the Home Governments is full of hope for us. We have also the most authoritative assurance in the Gracious Message of His Majesty the King Emperor addressed to the Princes and Peoples of India on the 1st November last, that the progress henceforward will be steadfast and sure. This assurance has been followed by the important reform proposals which Lord Morley has placed before the Parliament and the country. With these facts before us, can anyone say that our demands have received no consideration from the Government ?

Constitutional agitation being necessary in the best interests of India, we invited this Congress to this city. In the ordinary course, it is our turn to hold this years' Session. We have not taken the burden or responsibility of others in inviting you to this city. We are simply discharging our duty. May the merciful disposer of all events bless us with success !

A most gratifying feature of this Session of the Congress is that it is held under a constitution. Past Sessions were often reproached by even friendly critics as unregulated gatherings. although they were conducted according to the well established usages governing the procedure of similar assemblies. That reproach has been happily removed. It must be said to the credit of the said occurrences of Surat, that they opened our eyes to the necessity for a written constitution and rules of procedure. In this age of codification, we cannot afford to continue to be governed by unwritten usages. You are aware that a large number of delegates who had met at Surat appointed a Committee to frame the necessary regulations. The members of this Committee met at Allahabad in April last. Amongst those that met, were legislators of repute, and gentlemen of great intelligence, high culture, varied and long experience and

above all, distinguished for their valuable services to the Congress cause. After a deliberate consideration, the Committee framed the constitution and the rules of procedure according to which this Session of the Congress is to conduct its proceedings. The first Article of the constitution is nothing but the embodiment of the principles established with the consent of all parties at the Calcutta Congress of 1906 under the presidency of Dadabhai Naoroji—our Grand Old Man—who by his unparalleled devotion to the political regeneration of India and by his eminent services to our country in and out of Congress, has earned the esteem, affection and gratitude of all his fellow-subjects in the British Empire. So far as I can see, there does not seem to be any difference of opinion as to the propriety of the provisions of the first article in the Constitution. Except the provisions relating to the powers of the President and to the manner of taking votes in certain cases, all the other regulations are what ordinary associations in all civilised countries observe in the conduct of their business. Considering the importance of the Congress which is the premier national assembly of the whole of India and the paramount necessity of preserving order during its deliberations, the powers conferred on the President cannot be said to be unreasonable or excessive. The fact that the venerable Mr. Hume, Sir William Wedderburn and Dadabhai Naoroji have set the seal of their high authority on the constitution and the rules, ought to be a sufficient guarantee their reasonableness and fairness and should commend themselves to all parties. I do not of course claim perfection for them. They may be found imperfect in some respects, as they are only human acts. We must remember what Alexander Pope said on Criticism :

“Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see.

Thinks what never was, nor is, nor ever shall be”

It is of course open to the Congress to modify any rule found by actual experience to be inexpedient or unworkable, without affecting the principles embodied in the first article of the constitution.

However perfect laws may be, they will fail to secure the object in view unless they are implicitly obeyed. I entertain no doubt that those who take part in this Congress will loyally support the constitution. To so enlightened and wise an assembly as this, no words of exhortation from me are necessary to exercise the great virtues of patience and tolerance in the conduct of the very serious business we have before us. "Harmony" must be our motto. We must judge measures irrespective of their authors and sink personal differences in the pursuit of great and good objects. Nothing will be more lamentable than that the differences on non-essential points should stand in the way of our harmonious action. The disgraceful scenes of Surat are enough for all time to come. I therefore most solemnly appeal to all my countrymen to act as one man to secure the continuity and stability of the Congress.

A great deal of discussion has been going on about the ideal to which political movements in India should tend. As you are aware, absolute autonomy is the one proposed in certain quarters. No doubt, political thinkers of all shades of opinion are agreed that as a matter of abstract principle and as a philosophic doctrine, absolute freedom, ought to be the ideal to which nations should aspire. Our concern however is not with theoretical perfection but with practical politics. We have to enormously develop our industrial resources and considerably strengthen our capacity for corporate action. It will not do therefore that we should be carried away by the grandeur of the ideal of absolute autonomy without consideration of the long, weary and even useless steps that will have to be taken. As free and full a self-Government as can be had within the British Empire, is, I hold, as noble and inspiring an ideal as can be thought of in the conditions of our country, to stimulate our political activity and weld us into a nation worthy of the traditions of the past and fitted to play its part in the economy of the world. I can conceive of nothing more certain to retard, nay, to stay our progress altogether than what is being done by some who place absolute autonomy as the

ideal to be striven for, before the young and undeveloped minds whose capacity for mature judgement is not so sound as their imagination is powerful, and work upon their sentiments and lead them to form habits of thought and action subversive of the best interests of the country.

I beg to invite the attention of all Congressmen to the sage counsel given by our most sincere and staunch friends and well-wishers—Mr. Hume and Sir William Wedderburn in their letter addressed to me as the Chairman of the Reception Committee and published last month in all the leading papers of India. The only return we can make to them for their long disinterested, never-ceasing and philanthropic service in the cause of Indian progress, is to respect their advice and act up to it.

I cannot resist the temptation of repeating there the following sound and practical advice of the great Indian Statesman—the late Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao—who was the Chairman of the Congress Reception Committee in the session held in this city in 1887 :

“Let us stand firm in our conviction that these gatherings are useful and desirable for a multitude of reasons. Let our single aim be to justify ourselves by invariable loyalty, good sense and moderation in our thoughts, words and deed.. Much irritation and retaliation will be avoided if the mutual dependence of the rulers and the ruled is steadily kept in view. With the ruled it must be a postulate that the rulers err from ignorance and in spite of their efforts to avoid mistakes. By the rulers, it must be taken for granted that when subjects petition and expostulate, it is not in a spirit of disputation or cavilling much less of disaffection and disloyalty ; but only to enlighten those holding sway over them and in a peaceful and constitutional manner to have their wishes understood and their grievances made known.”

I do not intend to anticipate the subjects which will be placed before you after they are duly considered by the Subjects Committee. I will, however, make a few general observa-

tions on the "unrest" in India. It cannot be denied that there is discontent throughout the country, in varying degrees. This is mainly due to the growing poverty of the masses owing to various causes, such as the increase of population, the decline of Indian arts and industries the abnormal rise in the prices of all the necessities of life, and the heavy taxation. The attempts that are being made to increase the indigenous manufactures are not meeting with adequate success mostly for want of the requisite and up-to-date technical skill and training. The Government technical institutions, extremely few in number and very limited in their scope, have yet to show that they are effective agencies for the improvement of our industrial status. The avenues for emigration are being closed gradually. What should be due under the circumstances to solve the problem of ever-increasing poverty, is the question put by every thinking person without eliciting an answer. The Indian mind has been traditionally trained to look to the Sovereign for redress of all temporal ills. Our ancient literature contains instances of subjects holding their King responsible for natural but premature deaths and calling upon him to restore the dead to life. It is not strange that people brought up under such ideals should look to the Government for help when they are in want and without adequate means of meeting it, and feel discontented if the anticipated help does not come to them. The inadequate response hitherto made by Government, to our demands based upon legitimate aspirations and ambitions has to contribute its quota to the stock of prevailing discontent. A more literal policy towards, and active sympathy with, our pressing wants and aspirations which are happily now in evidence, will I feel sure, remove it.

It is a matter of deep regret that the prevailing discontent has some time found expression in intemperate and unwarranted language giving rise to prosecutions for sedition, and in a few cases, led to the commission for most outrageous crimes hitherto unknown in India and universally abhorred. There is a deplorable tendency in some Anglo-Indian and English papers and in not a few persons as evidence of general dis-

loyalty to the British Government. If "disloyalty" means the desire of the subversion of British Rule, I most emphatically deny the existence of any disloyalty except perhaps in the minds of a few thoughtless, insane, mischievous, and anarchically inclined persons. The anarchists are causing immense injury to the cause of Indian progress by their abominable and sinful acts which necessarily induce the Government to adopt repressive measures. Such measures mean further increase in Military and Police charges and ultimately lead to additional taxation and curtailment of expenditure on schemes for the promotion of the material prosperity of India. The anarchists do not seem to realise that they are bringing the innocent portion of their countrymen who form fortunately by far the great majority of Indian population, into undeserved suspicion and even trouble, and that their mother-country now requires most undisturbed peace for its advancement in commerce and industries. It is the sincere wish of every sane Indian that outrages on humanity and good Government so foreign to the spirit and traditions of the people should speedily disappear in the general interests of the country.

Turning from this sad picture, I am most happy to say that the general feelings of all classes of His Majesty's subjects throughout India towards the British Government is one of deep gratitude for the many blessings conferred on India, the most important of which are security of life and property, liberal education, medical and famine reliefs, sanitation and facilities of communication. The recent Loyal Celebrations of the Royal Proclamation Day and the demonstration of loyalty to the British Raj which evoked are strongest proof of the existing feeling of devotion to the British Government. The Indian cry for reform is similar in character to the cry of the suffragists and of the unemployed in England. In countries which have Parliamentary institutions, the Government shares with the people, the odium for the existence of grievances while, in countries where people have no real voice in the administration of public affairs, the whole blame necessarily falls on the Government.

It is with the deepest regret that I refer here to the great loss the country has sustained in the deaths of Rai Bahadur P. Ananda Charlu, C.I.E. and Sir V. Bhasham Aiyangar Kt., C.I.E. most of you had the privilege of personal acquaintance with Mr. Ananda Charlu, and knew him as a distinguished and zealous worker in the Congress cause. He regularly attended the sessions of the Congress, Provincial and District Conferences and almost all local public meetings ; and took an active part in their deliberations. The fact that he was unanimously elected the President of the Congress held at Nagpur and that he conducted its proceedings with great success, bear the strongest testimony to the high estimation in which he was held by all parties. In the Supreme Legislative Council of India, he, as the Representative of this Presidency, fearlessly defended and judiciously promoted the popular cause. What was most remarkable in him was his ready wit and humour which removed the tinge of offensiveness, from even his most severe criticisms. Although Sir V. Bhashyam Aiyangar did not take part in any popular movement which had for its object, the redress of grievances or legislative or administrative reforms, he may be truly said to have indirectly supported the Congress cause. By his high intellectual powers, conspicuous forensic abilities, deep research in the domains of law and sturdy independence, he proved the justice of the demand made by the Congress, for increasing the share of qualified Indians in the higher grades of public service. It is a distinct concession to his extraordinary merit that the most responsible and trusted office of Advocate-General is now held by our countrymen. As the Advocate-General, as a Member of the Local Legislative Council, as a Judge of the High Court and as a Senator and Member of the Syndicate of the Madras University, he rendered signal services to his country and boldly stood for what he believed to be right and just. It will be long, before the great gaps caused by the removal of these two illustrious and worthy sons of India from the scenes of their earthly labours, are filled.

Under the constitution, the power of electing the President of the Congress, is, you know, vested in the Provincial Congress Committees and the Reception Committee. These bodies have unanimously elected the Hon'ble Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, C.I.E., as the President of this Congress. His high literary and legal attainments, his eminence at the bar, his signal services as a Member of the Viceregal Legislative Council, his thorough grasp of Indian problems, his enlightened patriotism and independence, are well-known to you all. The electors must be congratulated on the excellent selection they have made. As Dr. Rash Behari Ghose was the President of the Committee which framed the constitution and rules of procedure, he is eminently qualified to preside over the proceedings of this session of the Congress and guide us in the conduct of our business. I need hardly remind you that his efficiency as President depends more upon your unstinted and cordial support than upon his eminent attainments and virtues. I must earnestly entreat you to follow his guidance and respect his authority.

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In this session 21 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I-A tendered its loyal homage to His Gracious Majesty, the King-Emperor and respectfully welcomed the messages sent by His Majesty to the Princes and People of India on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of Queen Victoria. Resolution I-B hoped that the principle of representative institutions be prudently extended. Resolution II appreciated the contents of the Despatch of the Secretary of State for India containing proposals of constitutional reforms to be introduced in India. Resolution III has its own importance which, for the first time, said about the condemnation of violence in these words :

“Resolved that this Congress places on record its emphatic and unqualified condemnation of the detestable outrages and



deeds of violence which have been committed recently in some parts of the country, and which are abhorrent to the loyal, humane and peace-loving nature of His Majesty's Indian subjects of every denomination."

Resolution IV repeated the stand of the Congress about proper treatment to be given to the people settled in British Colonies. Resolution V repeated the stand of the Congress on the question of Partition of Bengal. It said :

"Resolved that this Congress earnestly appeals to the Government of India and the Secretary of State for India to reverse the Partition of Bengal, or to modify it in such a manner as to keep the entire Bengali-speaking community under one and the same administration.

That this Congress is of opinion that the rectification of this admitted error will restore contentment to the Province of Bengal, give satisfaction to the other Provinces and instead of impairing, will enhance the prestige of His Majesty's Government throughout the country."

Resolution VI was related to *swadeshi*. It said :

"Resolved that this Congress accords its most cordial support to the *Swadeshi* movement, and calls upon the people of the country to labour for its success by making earnest and sustained efforts to promote the growth of industries capable of development in the country, and respond to the efforts of Indian producers by giving preference, wherever practicable, to Indian products over imported commodities even at a sacrifice."

Resolution VII desired cut in the military expenditure. Resolution VIII repeated the demand of the Congress for the separation of executive and judicial functions. Resolution IX demanded Indianisation of the armed forces. Resolution X recorded the protest of the Congress against Deportations Regulations that violated the norms of the liberty of the people. Resolution XI condemned repressive measures of the Government. It said :

**“Resolved that this Congress deploras the circumstances that have led to the passing of Act VII of 1908, but having regard to their drastic character and to the fact that a sudden emergency can alone afford any justification for such exceptional legislation, this Congress expresses its earnest hope that these enactments will have only a temporary existence in the Indian Statue Book.”**

Resolution XII demanded creation of a Legislative Council for the C.P. and Berar. Resolution XIII engaged the attention of the Government towards high prices of foodstuffs. Resolution XIV was related to the system of education. It said :

**“Resolved that this Congress is of opinion that the Government should take immediate steps,**

- (a) to make Primary Education free at once and gradually compulsory throughout the country ;**
- (b) to assign larger sums of money to Secondary and Higher Education (special encouragement being given where necessary to educate all backward classes) ;**
- (c) to make adequate provisions for imparting Industrial and Technical Education in the different Provinces having regard to local requirements ; and**
- (d) to give effective voice to the leaders of Indian public opinion in shaping the policy and system of Education in this country.**

**In the opinion of this Congress the time has arrived for people all over the country to take up earnestly the question of supplementing existing institutions and the effort of the Government by organising for themselves an independent system of Literary, Scientific, Technical and Industrial Education, suited to the conditions of the different Provinces in the country.”**

Resolution XV demanded cut in the land tax. Resolution XVI condoled the death of leaders like Babu Kalicharan Banerji, Pandit Bishambernath, Alfred Webb, Babu Bansilal Singh, Raj Bahadur and P. Anand Charlu. Resolution XVII thanked Sir William Wedderburn and other members of the British Committee for their selfless services in the cause of political advancement of India. Resolution XVIII said about the constitution of the All-India Congress Committee. Resolution XIX thanked the Reception Committee for its services. Resolution XX said that D.E. Wacha and Daji Abaji Khare be appointed as General Secretaries for the ensuing year. Finally, Resolution XXI fixed the next session at Lahore.

## **CONSTITUTION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS ORGANISATION**

*(Adopted by the Convention Committee held  
at Allahabad on the 18th and 19th of April, 1908)*

### ***Article I***

#### **Objects**

The objects of the Indian National Congress are the attainment by the people of India of a system of government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing Members of the British Empire and a participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those Members. These objects are to be achieved by constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit and developing and organising the intellectual, moral, economic and industrial resources of the country.

### ***Article II***

Every delegate to the Indian National Congress shall express in writing his acceptance of the objects of the Congress as laid down in Article I of this Constitution and his willingness to abide by this Constitution and by the Rules of the Congress hereto appended.

**Article III**

**Sessions of the Congress**

- (a) The Indian National Congress shall ordinarily meet once every year during Christmas holidays at such town as may have been decided upon at the previous session of the Congress.
- (b) If no such decision has been arrived at, the All-India Congress Committee shall decide the matter.
- (c) An extraordinary session of the Congress may be summoned by the All-India Congress Committee, either of its own motion or on the requisition of a majority of the Provincial Congress Committees, wherever and whenever it may deem it advisable to hold such session.
- (d) It shall be open to the All-India Congress Committee to change the venue of the Congress to some other town when such change is deemed by it to be necessary or desirable owing to serious or unforeseen difficulties or other contingencies of like nature.

**Article IV**

**Components Parts of the  
Organisation**

The Indian National Congress Organisation will consist of :

- (a) The Indian National Congress ;
- (b) Provincial Congress Committees ;
- (c) District Congress Committees or Associations affiliated to the Provincial Congress Committees ;
- (d) Sub-divisional or Taluka Congress Committees affiliated to the District Congress Committees or Associations ;
- (e) Political Associations or Public Bodies recognised as Electorates in accordance with clause (3) of Article XX ;
- (f) The All-India Congress Committee ;
- (g) The British Committee of the Congress ; and

- (h) Bodies formed or organised periodically by a Provincial Congress Committee, such as the Provincial or District Conferences or the Reception Committee of the Congress or Conference for the year.

#### *Article V*

No person shall be eligible to be a member of any of the Provincial or District or other Congress Committees or Associations of Bodies mentioned in clauses (b), (c), (d) and (h), of Article IV, unless he has attained the age of twenty-one and expresses in writing his acceptance of the objects of the Congress as laid down in Article I of this Constitution and his willingness to abide by this Constitution and by the Rules of the Congress hereto appended.

#### *Article VI*

##### **Provincial Congress Committees**

- (a) To act for the Province in Congress matters and for organising Provincial or District Conferences in such manner as it may deem proper, there shall be a Provincial Congress Committee with its headquarters at the chief towns of the Province in each of the following nine Provinces : I Madras ; II Bombay ; III United Bengal ; IV United Provinces ; V Punjab (including N.-W. Frontier Province) ; VI Central Provinces ; VII Behar ; VIII Berar and IX Burma.
- (b) The Provincial Sub-Committees of the Convention shall, in the first instance, form themselves into Provincial Congress Committees.
- (c) The Secretaries of the Convention Committee shall take steps to form separate Provincial Congress Committees for Central Provinces, Behar and Burma.

#### *Article VII*

Every Provincial Congress Committee so formed will add to its number :

- (a)** Representatives elected in accordance with its terms of affiliation by every affiliated District Congress Committee or Association referred to in clause (c) of Article IV.
- (b)** As many representatives of recognised Political Associations or Public Bodies referred to in clause (e) of Article IV as each Provincial Congress Committee may think fit to determine.
- (c)** Such other persons in the Province as may have attended as many sessions of the Congress as delegates as may be determined by each Provincial Congress Committee for its own Province.
- (d)** All such ex-Presidents of the Congress or ex-Chairmen of Reception Committees of the Congress as ordinarily reside within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Congress Committee and not have been enrolled as members of the said Committee in accordance with clause (b) of Article VI or by virtue of the provisions contained in any of the forgoing clauses of this Article.
- (e)** The Joint Secretary or Secretaries of the Congress ordinarily residing within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Congress Committee, such joint Secretary or Secretaries being added as *ex-officio* member or members of the said Committee.

**Article VIII**

Every member of the Provincial Congress Committee shall pay an annual subscription of not less than Rs. 5.

**Article IX**                      District or Other Congress  
Committees or Associations

The Provincial Congress Committee shall have affiliated to itself a District Congress Committee or Association for each District, wherever possible, or for such other areas in the

Province as it deems proper, subject to such conditions or terms of affiliation as it may deem expedient or necessary. It will be the duty of the District Congress Committee or Association to act for the District in Congress matters with the co-operation of any Sub-divisional or Taluka Congress Committee which may be organised and affiliated to it, subject in all cases to the general control and approval of the Provincial Congress Committee.

#### *Article X*

Every member of the District Congress Committee or Association shall either be a resident of the District or shall have a substantial interest in the District and shall pay an annual subscription of not less than one Rupee.

#### *Article XI*

No District Congress Committee or Association or Public Body referred to in clause (c) and (e) of Article IV shall be entitled to return representatives to the Provincial Congress Committee or Delegates to the Congress or to the Provincial Conference unless it contributes to the Provincial Congress Committee such annual subscription as may be determined by the latter.

#### *Article XII*

Each Provincial Congress Committee shall frame its own Rules not inconsistent with the Constitution and Rules of the Congress. No District or other Congress Committee or Association mentioned in Article IX shall frame any Rules inconsistent with those framed by the Provincial Congress Committee to which it is affiliated.

#### *Article XIII*      The All-India Congress Committee

The All-India Congress Committee shall, as far as possible, be constituted as hereinbelow laid down :

15 representatives of Madras ;  
15        "        "        Bombay ;

20	„	„	United Bengal ;
15	„	„	United Provinces ;
13	„	„	Punjab (including N.-W. Frontier Province) ;
7	„	„	Central Provinces ;
5	„	„	Behar ;
5	„	„	Berar ; and
2	„	„	Burma.

Provided, as far as possible, that one-fifth of the total number of representatives shall be Mohammedans.

All ex-Presidents of the Congress, residing or present in India and the General Secretaries of the Congress, who shall also be *ex-officio* General Secretaries of the All-India Congress Committee shall be *ex-officio* members in addition.

#### **Article XIV**

The representatives of each Province shall be elected by its Provincial Congress Committee at a meeting held, as far as possible, before the 30th of November for each year. If any Provincial Congress Committee fails to elect its representatives, the said representatives shall be elected by the delegates for that Province present at the ensuing Congress. In either case, the representatives of each Province shall be elected from among the members of its Provincial Congress Committee, and the election shall be made, as far as possible, with due regard to the proviso in Article XIII.

#### **Article XV**

The names of the representatives so elected by the different Provinces shall be communicated to the General Secretaries. These together with the names of the *ex-officio* members shall be announced at the Congress.

#### **Article XVI**

The President of the Congress at which the All-India Congress Committee comes into existence shall, if he ordinarily



resides in India, be *ex-officio* President of the All-India Congress Committee. In his absence the members of the All-India Congress Committee may elect their own President.

#### *Article XVII*

- (a) The All-India Congress Committee so constituted shall hold office from the dissolution of the Congress at which it comes into existence till the dissolution of the following Congress.
- (b) if any vacancy arises by death, resignation or otherwise, the remaining members of the Province in respect of which the vacancy has arisen shall be competent to fill it up for the remaining period.

#### *Article XVIII*

- (a) It will be the duty of the All-India Congress Committee to take such steps as it may deem expedient and practicable to carry on the work and propaganda of the Congress and it shall have the power to deal with all such matters of great importance or urgency as may require to be disposed of in the name of and for the purposes of the Congress, in addition to matters specified in this Constitution as falling within its powers or functions.
- (b) The decision of the All-India Congress Committee shall, in every case above referred to, be final and binding on the Congress and on the Reception Committee or the Provincial Congress Committee, as the case may be, that may be affected by it.

#### *Article XIX*

On the requisition in writing of not less than 20 of its members, the General Secretaries shall convene a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at the earliest possible time.

**Article XX                      Electorates and Delegates**

The right of electing delegates to the Indian National Congress shall vest exclusively in (1) the British Committee of the Congress; (2) Provincial or District or other Congress Committees or Associations formed or affiliated as hereinabove laid down; and (3) such Political Associations or Public Bodies of more than three years' standing as may be recognised in that behalf by the Provincial Congress Committee of the Province to which the Political Association or Public Body belongs, provided that no such Political Association or Public Body shall be so recognised unless the said Political Association or Public Body, by a Resolution at a General Meeting of its members, expresses its acceptance of the principles embodied in Article I of this Constitution and makes the acceptance on the same a condition precedent to new membership.

**Article XXI**

All delegates to the Indian National Congress shall pay a fee of Rs. 20 each and shall be not less than twenty-one years of age at the date of election.

**Article XXII                      Reception Committee of the  
Congress**

- (a) The Provincial Congress Committee of the Province in which the Congress is to be held shall take steps to form a Reception Committee for the Congress. Every one, who ordinarily resides in the Province, fulfils the conditions laid down in Article V of this Constitution and pays a minimum contribution of Rs. 25, shall be eligible as a member of the Reception Committee.
- (b) No one who is only a member of the Reception Committee, but not a Delegate, shall be allowed to vote or take part in the debate at the Congress.
- (c) The Reception Committee shall be bound to provide the necessary funds for meeting all the expenses of the

Congress as also the cost of preparing, printing, publishing and distributing the Report of the Congress.

**Article XXIII Election of the President**

(a) In the month of June, the Reception Committee shall consult the several Provincial Congress Committees as to the selection of the President for the year's Congress. The Provincial Congress Committees shall make their recommendations by the end of July; and in the month of August the Reception Committee shall meet to consider the recommendations. If the person recommended by a majority of the Provincial Congress Committees is accepted by a majority of the members of the Reception Committee present at a special meeting called for the purpose, that person shall be the President of the next Congress. If, however the Reception Committee is unable to elect the President in the manner mentioned above, the matter shall forthwith be referred by it to the All-India Congress Committee, whose decision shall be arrived at, as far as possible, before the end of September. In either case, the election shall be final. Provided that in no case shall the person so elected as President belong to the Province in which the Congress is to be held.

(b) There shall be no formal election of the President by or in the Congress, but merely the adoption [in accordance with the provisions in that behalf laid down in Rule 3, clause (b) of the "Rules" hereto appended] on a formal Resolution requesting the President, already elected in the manner hereinabove laid down, to take the chair.

**Article XXIV Subjects Committee**

The Subjects Committee to be appointed at each session of the Congress to settle its programme of business to be transacted shall, as far as possible, consist of :

**Not more than 15 representatives of Madras :**

„	15	„	„	Bombay ;
„	20	„	„	United Bengal ;
„	15	„	„	United Provinces ;
„	13	„	„	Punjab ;

**(including N.-W.F. Province) ;**

**Not more than 7 representatives of Central Provinces ;**

„	5	„	„	Behar ;
„	5	„	„	Berar ;
„	2	„	„	Burma ;
„	5	„	„	British Committee of the Congress ;

**and additional 10 representatives of the Province in which the Congress is held ;**

**all the abovementioned representatives being elected, in accordance with Rule 9 of the "Rules" hereto appended, by the delegates attending the Congress from the respective Provinces.**

**The President of the Congress for the year, the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the year, all ex-Presidents and ex-Chairmen of Reception Committees, the General Secretaries of the Congress, the local Secretaries of the Congress for the year, not exceeding six in number, and all the members of the All-India Congress Committee for the year, shall, in addition, be *ex-officio* members of the Subjects Committee.**

#### **Article XXV**

**The President of the Congress for the year shall be *ex-officio* Chairman of the Subjects Committee.**

#### **Article XXVI Contentious Subjects and Interest of Minorities**

- (a) No subject shall be passed for discussion by the Subjects Committee or allowed to be discussed at any Congress by the President thereof, to the introduction**

of which the Hindu or Mohammedan delegates, as a body, object by a majority of three-fourths of their number ; and if ; after the discussion of any subject which has been admitted for discussion, it shall appear that the Hindu or Mohammedan delegates, as a body, are, by a majority of three-fourths of their number opposed to the Resolution which it is proposed to pass thereon, such Resolution shall be dropped.

- (b) The President of the Congress for the year may nominate 5 delegates to the Subjects Committee to represent minorities or to make up such deficiencies as he may think necessary.
- (c) In any representations which the Congress may make or in any demands which it may put forward for the larger association of the people of India with the administration of the country, the interests of minorities shall be duly safeguarded.

#### *Article XXVII*      Voting at the Congress

Ordinarily, all questions shall be decided by a majority of votes as laid down in Rule 21 of the "Rules" hereto appended, but in cases falling under Article XXX of this Constitution or whenever a division is duly asked for in accordance with Rule 22 of the "Rules" hereto appended, the voting at the Congress shall be by Provinces only. In cases falling under clause (1) of Article XXX, each Province shall have one vote, to be given as determined by a majority of its delegates present at the Congress. In all other cases of Voting by Province, the vote of each Province, determined as aforesaid, shall be equivalent to the number of representatives assigned to the Provinces in constituting the All-India Congress Committee.

#### *Article XXVIII*      The British Committee of the Congress

The Reception Committee of the Province in which the Congress is held shall remit to the British Committee, of the

Congress, through the General Secretaries of the Congress, half the amount of the fees received by it from delegates.

**Article XXIX      General Secretaries**

- (a) The Indian National Congress shall have two General Secretaries who shall be annually elected by the Congress. They shall be responsible for the preparation, publication and distribution of the Report of the Congress. They shall also be responsible for the preparation of Draft Resolutions of the Congress, which they must send to the Provincial Congress Committees at the latest in the first week of December.
- (b) The All-India Congress Committee shall make adequate provision for the expenses of the work devolving on the General Secretaries, either out of the surplus at the disposal of the Reception Committee or by calling upon the provincial Congress Committee to make such contributions as it may deem fit to apportion among them.

**Article XXX      Changes in the Constitution or Rules**

No addition, alteration or amendment shall be made (1) in Article I of this Constitution except by a unanimous vote of all the Provinces, and (2) in the rest of this Constitution or in the "Rules" hereto appended except by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the votes of the Provinces, provided, in either case, that no motion for any such addition, alteration or amendment shall be brought before the Congress unless it has been previously accepted by the Subjects Committee of the Congress for the year.

**Article XXXI      Transitory Provisions**

- (a) The Committee appointed by the Convention at Surat on 28th December 1907 for drawing up a Constitution for the Congress shall exercise all the powers of the

All-India Congress Committee till the formation of the latter at the next session of the Congress.

- (b) The Secretaries of the said Convention Committee shall discharge the duties of the General Secretaries of the Congress till the dissolution of the next session of the Congress.
- (c) The President and Secretaries of the Convention Committee should, in consultation with the Secretaries of the several Provincial Sub-Committees, arrange for the holding of a meeting of the Congress during Christmas next in accordance with this Constitution.
- (d) For the year 1908, the Reception Committee may, in electing the President, consult the Provincial Congress Committees in the beginning of October, before the end of which month, the Provincial Congress Committees, on being so consulted, shall make their recommendations, and the rest of the procedure prescribed in Article XXIII should be followed and completed, as far as possible before the end of November.

Rash Behary Ghose,  
*President, Convention Committee.*

Dinsha Edulji Wacha,  
Daji Abaji Khare,  
*Hony. Secretaries, Convention Committee.*

## **RULES FOR THE CONDUCT AND REGULATION OF THE MEETINGS**

1. The Indian National Congress shall ordinarily hold an Annual Session at such place as may have been decided upon in accordance with Article III of the "Constitution" and on such days during Christmas week as may be fixed by Reception Committee. An extraordinary session of the Congress shall be held at such town and on such days as the All-India Congress Committee may determine.

2. Each Congress session shall open with a meeting of the delegates at such time and place as may be notified by the Reception Committee. The time and place of subsequent sittings of the session shall be fixed and announced by the President of the Congress.

3. The proceedings on the opening day and at the first sitting of each Congress session shall, as far as possible, consist of :

- (a) The Chairman of the Reception Committee's inaugural address of welcome to the delegates.
- (b) The adoption of a formal Resolution, to be moved, seconded and supported by such delegates as the Chairman of the Reception Committee invites or permits, requesting the President elected by the Reception Committee or the All-India Congress Committee, as the case may be, to take the chair, no opposition by way of a motion for amendment, adjournment or otherwise being allowed to postpone or prevent the carrying out of the said Resolution.
- (c) The President's taking the chair and his inaugural address.
- (d) Reading or distribution of the Report, if any, of the All-India Congress Committee and any statement that the General Secretaries may have to make.
- (e) Any formal motions of thanks, congratulations, condolences, etc., as the President of the Congress may choose to move from the chair.
- (f) The adjournment of the Congress for the appointment of the Subjects Committee and the announcement by the President of the time and place of the meetings of the delegates of the different Provinces for election of the members of the Subjects Committee and also of the first meeting of the Subjects Committee.



4. No other business or motions in any form shall be allowed at the opening sitting of the Congress session.

5. The Chairman of the Reception Committee shall preside over the assembly at the first sitting until the President takes the chair. The President of the Congress shall preside at all sittings of the Congress session as well as at all meetings of the Subjects Committee. In case of his absence and during such absence, any ex-President of the Congress present, who may be nominated by the President and in case no ex-President is available, the Chairman of the Reception Committee shall preside at the Congress sitting; provided that the Subjects Committee may in such cases choose its own Chairman.

6. The President or the Chairman shall have, at all votings, one vote in his individual capacity and also a casting vote in case of equality of votes.

7. The President or Chairman shall decide all points of order and procedure summarily and his decision shall be final and binding.

8. The President or Chairman shall have the power, in cases of grave disorder or for any other legitimate reason, to adjourn the Congress either to a definite time or *sine die*.

9. The election of the members of the Subjects Committee shall take place at meetings of the delegates of different Provinces held at such place and time as may be announced by the President. Each such meeting, in case of contest, shall have a Chairman who will first receive nominations, each nomination being made by at least five delegates, and then after announcing all the nominations he may ask each delegate to give in a list of the members he votes for, or he may put the nominated names to the vote in such order as he pleases, or if there are only two rival lists, he shall take votes on these lists and announce the result of the election and forthwith communicate the same to the General Secretaries of the Congress.

10 The Subjects Committee shall deliberate upon and prepare the agenda paper for the business to be transacted at the next Congress sitting. The General Secretaries shall, as far as practicable, distribute among the delegates a printed copy of the agenda paper for each sitting before the sitting commences.

11. At each sitting of the Congress, the order in which business shall be transacted shall be as follows :

- (a) The Resolutions recommended for adoption by the Subjects Committee.
- (b) Any substantive motion not included in (a) but which does not fall under Article XXX of the "Constitution" and which 25 delegates request the President in writing, before the commencement of the day's sitting, to be allowed to place before the Congress, provided, however, that no such motion shall be allowed unless it has been previously discussed at a meeting of the Subjects Committee and has received the support of at least a third of the members then present.

12. Nothing in the foregoing rule shall prevent the President from changing the order of the Resolutions mentioned in Rule 11 (a) or from himself moving from the chair formal motions of thanks, congratulations, condolences or the like.

13. The proposers, seconders and supporters of the Resolutions recommended for adoption by the Subjects Committee shall be delegates and shall be selected by the said Committee. The President may allow other delegates to speak on the Resolutions at his discretion and may allow any distinguished visitor to address the Congress. Nothing in the foregoing, however, shall prevent the President from moving from the chair such Resolutions as he may be authorised to do by the Subjects Committee.

14. An amendment may be moved to any motion provided that the same is relevant to the question at issue, that it does not raise a question already decided or anticipate any question embraced in a resolution on the agenda paper for the day and that it is couched in proper language and is not antagonistic to the fundamental principles of the Congress. Every amendment must be in the form of a proposition complete in itself.

15. When amendments are moved to a motion, they shall be put to the vote in the reverse order to that in which they have been moved.

16. A motion for an adjournment of the debate on a proposition may be made at any time and so also, with the consent of the President or Chairman a motion of an adjournment of the House. The President or Chairman shall have the power to decline to put to vote any motion for adjournment if he considers it to be vexatious or obstructive or an abuse of the rules and regulations.

17. All motions, substantive or by way of amendment, adjournment, etc., shall have to be seconded, failing which they shall fail. No motions, whether those coming under Rule 11 (b) or for amendment, adjournment, closure, etc., shall be allowed to be moved unless timely intimation thereof is sent to the President with the motion clearly stated in writing over the signatures of the proposer and seconder with the name of the Province from which they have been elected as delegates.

18. No one who has taken part in the debate in Congress on a resolution shall be allowed to move or second a motion for adjournment or amendment in the course of the debate on that Resolution. If a motion for adjournment of the debate on any proposition is carried, the debate on the said proposition shall then cease and may be resumed only after the business on the agenda paper for the day is finished. A motion for adjourn-

ment of the House shall state definitely the time when the House is to resume business.

19. A motion for a closure of the debate on a proposition may be moved at any time after the lapse of half-an-hour from the time the proposition was moved. And if such motion for closure is carried, all discussion upon the original proposition or amendments proposed to it shall at once stop and President shall proceed to take votes.

20. No motion for a closure of the debate shall be moved whilst a speaker is duly in possession of the House.

21. All questions shall be decided by a majority of votes, subject, however, to the provisions of Articles XXVII and XXX of the "Constitution." Votes shall ordinarily be taken by a show of hands or by the delegates for or against standing up in their places in turn to have the numbers counted.

22. In cases not falling under Article XXX of the "Constitution," any twenty members of a Congress sitting may demand a division within 5 minutes of the declaration of the result of the voting by the President and such division shall be granted. Thereupon the delegates of each Province shall meet at such time and place as the President may direct and the Chairman of each such meeting shall notify to the President the vote of the Province within the time specified by the President.

23. Every member of a sitting of the Congress of the Subjects Committee shall be found (a) to occupy a seat in the block allotted to his province, save as provided for in Rule 30, (b) to maintain silence when the President rises to speak or when another member is in possession of the House, (c) to refrain from hisses or interruptions or any kind or indulgence in improper and un-Parliamentary language, (d) to obey the Chair, (e) to withdraw when his own conduct is under debate, after he has heard the charge and had been heard thereon,

and (f) generally to conduct himself with propriety and decorum.

24. No member shall have the right at a Congress sitting to speak more than once on any motion except for a personal explanation or for raising a point of order. But the mover of a substantive motion (not one for amendment or adjournment) shall have the right of reply. A person who has taken part in a debate may speak upon an amendment or motion for adjournment moved after he had spoken. The President or Chairman shall have the right to fix a time-limit upon all speakers, as also to call or order or stop any speaker from further continuing his speech even before the time-limit expires, if he is guilty of tedious repetitions, improper expressions, irrelevant remarks, etc., and persists in them in spite of the warning from the President.

25. If a person does not obey the President's or the Chairman's orders or if he is guilty of disorderly conduct, the President shall have the right, with a warning in the first instance, and without a warning in case of contumacious disregard of his authority, to ask such member to leave the precincts of the House and on such requisition the member so ordered shall be bound to withdraw and shall be suspended from his functions as a member during the day's sitting.

26. If the President considers that the punishment he can inflict according to the foregoing section is not sufficient, he may, in addition to it, ask the House to award such punishment as the House deems proper. The Congress shall have the power in such cases of expelling the member from the entire Congress session.

27. The Reception Committee shall organise a body of such persons as it may deem fit for the purpose of keeping order during the meeting of the Congress or of its Subjects Committee or at divisions. There shall be a Captain at the head of this body and he shall carry out the orders of the President or the Chairman.

28. Visitors may be allowed at the sitting of the Congress on such terms and conditions as the Reception Committee determines. They may, at any time, be asked to withdraw by the President. They shall be liable to be summarily elected from the House if they enter the area marked out for the delegates, or if they disobey the Chair, or if they are guilty of disturbance or obstruction, or if they are in anywise disorderly in their behaviour.

29. The meetings of the Subjects Committee shall be open only to the members of that Committee and the meeting of the delegates of each Province at divisions shall be open to the delegates of that Province only, subject in either case to the provisions of Rule 27.

30. The Chairman of the Reception Committee and the President, as well as the Secretaries may, at their discretion, accommodate on the Presidential platform, (1) Leading members of the Congress, (2) Distinguished visitors, (3) Members of the Reception Committee, and (4) Ladies, whether Delegates or Visitors.

31. The foregoing Rules shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Provincial or Districts Conferences organised by the Provincial Congress Committees as provided for in Article VI of the "Constitution."

Rash Behary Ghose,  
*President, Convention Committee.*  
Dinsha Eudlji Wacha,  
Daji Abaji Khare,  
*Hony. Secretaries, Convention Committee.*

*The Twenty-Fourth Session (1909)*

It opened in the city of Lahore on 27 December and sat for three days. The weather was severely cold, but very hot was the political climate of the country on account of the pernicious rules and regulations framed under the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909 relating to the separate or communal electo-

rate system. As a matter of fact, the hopes of the constitutionalists were shattered due to these pernicious provisions as, in the words of Mrs. Annie Besant, the 'Reforms "had been wrecked by the rules made for their carrying out ; the Punjab was restless and sullen."\* Though the Bradlaugh Hall was 'fairly well filled', as the official report says, the number of delegates fell down to 243—76 from the Punjab, 64 from the U.P., 57 from Bombay and Sindh, 20 from Madras, 20 from Bengal and 6 from the C.P. and Berar. Lala Harkishan Lal delivered the welcome address. After that Surendranath Banerjea proposed and G.K. Parekh seconded (and some others like Raizada Bhagat Ram and Rai Bahadur L. A. Govindaraghava Aiyer supported) the name of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya for the presidentship and then he took the chair amidst loud applause.

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\*Annie Besant : *How India Wrought for Freedom*, p. 491. In the words of B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : "It was really during the time of Lord Minto that the idea of communal representation took shape. Earlier of course had Curzon kindled deliberately this baneful communal consciousness in partitioning Bengal and carving out Eastern Bengal and Assam as a separate Province with a Muslim majority. Although Lord Minto was sent to ease the horse which Lord Curzon had ridden for several long years almost to the point of death, still the saddle of communal separateness on which Curzon had been riding was left intact on the animal's back. Minto's scheme of Reforms provided for separate electorates for Muslims and yet their rights to vote in the joint electorates were left intact. The narrow-minded politicians pointed out that the Hindu minorities in East Bengal and Assam and the Punjab were not given a like privilege, but this was really going off the track. What was more egregious was the different franchises set up for the different communities. To become a voter, the Muslim had to pay income-tax on Rs. 3,000 a year, while a non-Muslim had to pay on three lakhs a year. It was enough for the Muslim graduate to have a standing of three years to become a voter, while the non-Muslim was required to have thirty years' standing. Three thousand against three lakhs of income and three years standing against thirty years of standing. We hear occasionally echoes of like demand when in the absence of universal adult franchise, the Muslims demand varying standards of franchise for the two communities so as to maintain the proper ratios among the voters," *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, pp. 44-45.

## **COUNCIL REFORMS WITH UNJUST AND IMPOLITIC REGULATIONS\***

The Hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Brother  
Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen—

In the name and on behalf of the Reception Committee of the Indian National Congress, I accord you all a hearty and sincere welcome. It is a welcome from a heart, which has been anxious and uneasy for the last 12 months, and if I may be allowed to use the language of metaphor, I shall say from the Captain, as if it were, of a leaking, burning and sinking ship, but from the Captain of a crew, small though in number, but staunch, faithful and dutiful.

Ladies and Gentlemen, sixteen years ago, up to a day, when I stood in a similar position, on behalf of another, now unhappily on more, I mean the late lamented Sardar Dayal Singh Majithia, to accord a hearty welcome to the delegates of the Congress of 1893. I had the privilege to read out an Address, which was full of the sentiments of loyalty to the British Crown, and which frankly and fully acknowledged all the benefits, that we the people of this country had drawn from association with a people, more gifted than ourselves. It was the Address of a man, whose ancestors had played an important part in the preceding regime of the Sikhs, whose father alone, it is believed, had shown a sense of loyalty to his master's family, and who himself had never been accused of low or base ambition; whose whole life was an example of self-abnegation; and lastly, whose time and money were consecrated to the service of his country and its people. He was besides a thoughtful, well informed, far-sighted and a wise leader. In the Address referred to above he observed :

“It is our peculiar good fortune to live under a Government which by the spread of liberal education and the annihilation

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\*Address delivered by Harkishan Lal, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Lahore Congress held in December, 1909.



of distance, had made it practicable for us—the inhabitants of the remote parts of this vast Empire—to meet every year at different centres to discuss those great problems, so intimately connected with the advancement and prosperity of our fatherland.” “We clearly see”, he further said, “the prospect of a hopeful future before us under the benign influence of British rule”; and he added that “I think most of us present here believe that the kingdom of heaven is not behind but before. The darkness that enshrouded the land for so many centuries has begun to be dispelled, and the streaks are already visible above the horizon, that herald the approach of a glorious dawn.”

The following words from Sardar Dyal Singh’s address are also worthy of being recalled. “Now the wand of the magician has touched our eyes; the history and literature of England have permeated our minds, the great heritage of our Western Aryan brethren has descended on us collaterally. We happily live under a constitution whose watchword is Freedom and whose main pillar is Toleration. “It would be superfluous now to meet the stale old charge of disloyalty and sedition brought against the Congress. It has been discussed thread-bare and the Congress has come triumphant out of the discussion.”

These words, which I read out to you 16 years ago, have been, and are still, the watchwords of my political faith; and they have served as a beacon light to a wanderer in a country steeped in darkness. Their reproduction has been necessitated by the pronouncement of the leader of the Punjab Muslim League, at their last anniversary, at which he is reported to have observed with regard to the Congress that it was a movement the leaders of which, while professing loyalty to the British Crown, questioned the good faith of the Government as regards many of its measures. It is necessary to recall also the oft-repeated assertion of several young enthusiasts that the loyalty of the Congress to the British Crown was a new development, the consequence of the debasement of the standard of patriotism, that the original leaders of the movement

had set before them. Both parties are wrong. In one case the charge laid is due to a lack of knowledge of historical facts, in the other case it is due to a studied desire to do mischief.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this is not all that has been said against the Congress in this province, during the last twelve months, and I shall, with your permission, deal succinctly, as far as possible, with the other opinions also that have been expressed against us, trusting that I may be excused from touching on them in an Address whose sole object is to welcome the delegates.

Some have said that the Congress has become unpopular because it teaches self-abnegation in politics, implying thereby that self-abnegation in politics is a vice, a suicide, and an act to be avoided. Others have urged that "Political agitation maintained on those lines was bound to generate discontent, particularly in the minds of the younger generation ; that such discontent would surely, in the process of time, develop into active unrest, that active unrest would give rise to violence, and bearing in mind the inflammable material with which the nationalist orator had to deal, a state of things would, in the end, be brought into existence in the hitherto peaceful land, subversive of all law and order, disastrous to the cause of peaceful progress, and calling for stringent measures on the part of a peaceful Government." There could not be a stronger indictment than this, but it is only a paraphrase of the attitude of a great man towards the movement who himself, I am sure, would not have claimed for himself the right of speaking for all time to come. The late lamented Sir Syed was a wise man, but not the last of political prophets.

There is still another view. One of our most respected men observes that "Politics have engrossed the attention of educated Hindus too much for the last quarter of a century, to the detriment of social and economic questions, and created unhealthy excitement in the minds of our young people and warped their moral notions." "Truth to say", he goes on to observe, "the

active pursuit of politics by educated Hindus has brought the community little good, but has created a dislike against it in the minds of the bulk of Anglo-Indians." Some again urge that the demands of the Congress are impossible, and that by putting forward these demands, the Congress has prejudiced the Hindu community in the eyes of the Government. An Anglo-Indian friend whispered in my ears the other day "that the day of the Congress had gone, that it had served its purpose and ought to disappear, but he recognised extremism as a deflection from a good cause, i.e., the Congress." An aristocrat of the land is reported to have expressed a determination to avoid a certain Conference, if held in or near the Bradlaugh Hall.

Ladies and Gentlemen, against the doctrine of self-abnegation one may well urge the necessity, which all majorities feel for conciliating minorities ; and that patriotism would cease to connote anything useful, if people were not prepared to sacrifice some present interest to secure the lasting good of the country in future. As to political agitation generating discontent, I may be permitted to say that all discontent is not disloyalty, and that political agitation conducted on constitutional lines is permitted by Government. If in a few cases, men of immature minds have been led by their crudities into excesses, the law is strong enough to put them down. The argument urged by Sir Proful that politics have engrossed too much of our attention for the last 25 years, to the detriment of social and economic questions, is met by the opinion of the same authority, quoted later on that "politics should be reserved for an undenominational body like the Congress." As to the objection that the Congress demands are impossible, it is sufficient to say that several of them have already been conceded. The remarks of my Anglo-Indian friend and the aristocrat of the land require no comments.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have now dealt briefly with all that has been urged against the Congress in this province, and I now beg you to tell me seriously whether you think that the

Congress is a bad business, and that it should be put a stop to. Tell me frankly also whether you one and all feel uncomfortable under the load of charges and accusations that have been brought against us in the paragraphs just read out to you. I am sure you do not, but these charges have been believed by many unwary people with the result, that we have a very small audience today, and that position that has been created is a serious one in all conscience, so far as the Congress policy and propaganda are concerned ; but I feel confident that before quitting this Hall finally, at the end of the session, you will have made a different impression on the people of the Punjab.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let us understand clearly what the Congress is :

It is an assembly of educated Indians, which meets once a year, in a selected place, to give a frank expression to its opinions, on certain subjects of a political nature. If no disloyal expressions are used, and if the benefits that the country has derived under the British administration, are always acknowledged, how could the assembly be stigmatized as disloyal ?

Even the Muslim League claims for itself "the right of giving warning to the authorities and, if necessary, to enter a respectful protest, as it is sincerely convinced that the errors of the British Government are but errors of judgement." Do we go any further ? The President of the Hindu Conference after saying all that in his opinion could be urged against the Congress, winds up this part of his discourse by saying that "politics should form the peculiar province of an undenominational body like the Congress, and that political concessions if sought should be sought equally for all ranks, creeds and races of His Majesty's Indian subjects and not for one section only." This opinion of his exonerates us from the charge brought against us, of putting the Hindus in a difficult position by Congress agitation, as it has never done more or less than what he himself prescribes for it. One of our staunchest opponents, in this province, himself lays down that the

principles as settled by the Allahabad Convention are the only principles on which the Congress can be run as such. Where is our fault then if we run the Congress on those lines ?

If the speech of Rai Bahadur Lala Lal Chand, the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Hindu Conference, had been delivered at the Muslim League Anniversary, and that of Khan Bahadur Muhammed Shafi, Chairman of the Muslim League, delivered at the Hindu Conference they would *mutatis mutandis* have served the same purpose, and produced the same effects as they have actually done. Both these gentlemen think that their communities have received new consciousness, that communal interests should have a preferential place over the general interests of the nation at large, that harmony should prevail between all communities, and that peace should prevail between all communities, and that peace should prevail in the land. The Congress, while differing from them in being undenominational, is at one with them in desiring that peace and harmony should prevail.

Summing up, the Congress, has neither done mischief, nor misled the people, nor again has it set the example of class agitation as it agitates for all and on constitutional lines. It has always refused to identify itself with any section of the Indian nation as it is undenominational and will, I hope, always keep to this policy, and abide by these principles.

But there are a few other facts worth considering. If the Congress pleads for all and pleads fair why should the Muslims call it a mischievous agitation, the Hindus brand it as harmful, the aristocrats shun it, the Government dislike it, and the goaheads call it beggary. Before attempting a reply, one ought to be convinced if these opinions are genuine, and if these opinions are not genuine what a sad reflection they cast on the political morals of the land.

I need not labour this point any further. The situation created, in my humble opinion, is due to the attitude of certain administrators and legislators, who have not always kept in

view the lofty ideals of the founders of the Empire. It is absolutely essential that the high standard of British justice, which the older generation of Anglo-Indians kept in view, should not be lowered, and that temper should not warp judgement. I am grieved to say that the legislation and administration of the last decade have not, in the best opinion of the country, been free from these defects. An attempt at reconciliation and reversion to older standards is being made, but it will take time to undo the mischief that has been done.

If the Muslim League is to be favoured, the Hindus will inevitably get consolidated ; if the aristocrats are to be patted on the back, democratic opinions are sure to grow, if the Zemindars become the favourites, the traders will get dissatisfied, and if the Councils are to be filled with nonentities, outside political agitation is bound to increase.

The argument may be extended further, but it is not necessary. All parties concerned have to bear in mind that action and reaction are always equal and opposite. This applies to physical and political phenomena with equal force, and we must not forget that in a country where the rulers are outsiders, the interests of the rulers and the ruled do not always coincide, and therefore the doctrine of action and reaction applies with greater force. It applies equally with the communal effects of sections of population, tend in different directions, and no one section can claim the right of exemption from the rule.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I crave your pardon for having taken up your time with general dissertation. I must, however, refer to a few matters of practical politics, pertaining to the Province of Punjab, before I conclude.

We had our last Congress here in 1900, when Mr. K.P. Roy, the leader of the Indian Bar in the Province and the outspoken advocate of our rights, had the good fortune of according you a welcome. Alas, he has passed away, and I have to mourn his loss as he had to do of his predecessor. In him we have lost a

real tower of strength, and I am not sure whether he can be replaced in future, as he has not been replaced so far. With his death and the depletion of our ranks, otherwise, we are not able to show you the kind of hospitality which your position in life demands, and which our hearts desire, but which on account of our limited purse and time, we cannot extend to you. I apologise to you sincerely for this, and I hope you will generously overlook our shortcomings.

Since the last Congress, the most notable political events in the Province were the troubles of 1907, which are now happily nearly over. As the events are very recent, I do not propose to analyse the causes that gave rise to them; nor should I allude to the persons who suffered a deal of inconvenience, in consequence thereof; but one may refer with pleasure to the improved relations between the Anglo-Indian and the Indian communities, which have come to exist thereafter, and signs are not wanting to show, that such relations are capable of further improvement, and that there is a mutual desire to improve the same. One cause of irritation, however, still subsists and we hope that the leaders of our community will try their best to remove it by their influence. This is the uninformed journalism, in the hands of people hardly out of their teens, with undeveloped sense of responsibility; with insufficient knowledge of affairs, lacking in the power of weighing causes and effects, and without that power adjusting just and fair means to a noble end, which alone entitles people to deal with political problems.

Next to them in political importance, comes the recent organisation of the Muslim League, the Chiefs' Association, and the Hindu Conference. The last has not yet assumed politics as its creed, but political reasons seem to have given birth to it. Personally I dislike all sectional movements with common and similar interests and objects which can be more easily served and achieved by common and joint efforts. They are liable to do more mischief than good, and must be condemned. If the Government is to be found at fault for class preference in

legislation and administration, surely the associations, which sections of the community, organise in order to strengthen and to perpetuate, the tendency in the Government, must also be severely condemned. This leads me naturally to the consideration of the policy underlying the new Council Regulations and the Land Legislation of the Punjab.

The Council Regulations, inasmuch as they have legalised class preference, must be condemned by all right-thinking people of the country, and by the friends and well-wishers of India, and of the Indian Government. They should be further condemned, in so far as they give preference to one and only one community, without regard to the interests of other communities, minorities as well as majorities. These regulations are unjust, and I may venture to say, impolitic; and must at an early date be set aside in favour of more equitable and just principles. No valid reasons have been assigned in support of this policy, and proof is wanting to justify its adoption. If it be a sound policy in the opinion of the authorities, why do they not carry it to its logical conclusion? The Council Reforms, as applied to the Punjab, are open to further serious objections, the Province has not been put on the same footing with sister provinces, as regards the number of members and the method of their appointment. In the share of the Province in the Imperial Council the Hindus and Sikhs have a real grievance. The Punjab has never been a favoured province, as far as treatment of its people goes, and as a fair and fit representation on the Imperial Council is still denied, I am afraid, the fates are not in our favour.

Though the measure is open to serious objections, to some of which I have referred above, I am not insensible to the good intention of Lord Morley and Minto and to their associates in Councils. I am thankful to the British Government for conferring this boon on the people of the country, and in thus placing whole-hearted confidence in their capacity and character. The East is no doubt dissatisfied with the old methods of Government. Even in Afghanistan, there has been a movement



for a popular form of Government ; the attitude of Japan, China, Persia and Turkey, in this direction, being well-known facts already. India could no longer afford to have an archaic form of Government ; and happily our rulers have discerned and recognised it in time. We are all grateful, and heartily grateful, and shall cordially support in the Congress an expression of gratitude by the assembled representatives of India.

Concerning the Land Legislation of the Punjab, I do not propose to detain you long. The three Acts of 1900, 1905 and 1907 have formed the subject of reference to Government since 1907, and recently they were the main feature of the Hindu Address to the Viceroy, on his visit to Lahore, and subsequently were dealt with at some length in the Representations of the Hindu Sabha to the Viceroy, and formed the subject of discussion at the Hindu Conference. The Viceroy, on behalf of the Government of India, has suggested revision of the Law of Pre-emption, and the Hindu members of the Council of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, may be expected to safeguard Hindu interests. As to the other two Acts, the Viceroy understands from the representation that the petitioners do not desire the repeal of the Acts, but a more favourable and extended application of the law to the members of the Hindu community. How far this was the meaning of their representation the Hindu Sabha would be able to explain. The Hindu Conference that followed, has from the lips of Sir Proful Chander Chatterjee directly, and from the lips of the Hon'ble Mr. Shadi Lal impliedly, accepted the principle of the Legislation ; though the rank and file of the Conference do not accept the position taken up by these two leaders. My own opinion, based on economic and social considerations, so far as I can form an opinion on facts before me, is in direct opposition to these leaders ; but it would be a little bit presumptuous on my part, to ask the Congress to adopt my views, in opposition to the views of the office holders of the Hindu Conference, and I would leave the subject in the hands of the Punjab delegates.

In some features of administration, peculiar to the Punjab, we have made no progress. Our Chief Court is still not a High Court, though the Chief Judge recently expressed his opinion, that in the estimation of the Government the Chief Court had achieved as high a position as that of a High Court inasmuch as its Chief Judges were now knighted, on the day of their appointment, and not at the end of the half year.

The Executive and the Judiciary are as mixed up as ever, though a small effort at separation has been made, but the Bar is still kept out of the lower grades of Judicial appointments, as before, and the pay of the Judicial officer is not on the same scale as in other provinces.

In some respects we are better off than other sister provinces and we are really grateful for the same. Agriculture is being looked after, and extended and Technical Education in several directions is receiving attention. Our Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Louis Dane, has set himself to improve the economic condition of the people so far as it lies in his power, and we are really indebted to him for the interest he takes in our welfare.

This naturally reminds me of the Exhibition of 1909 which is now open, and which I am sure you will visit before leaving Lahore. It is the outcome of the efforts of the Congress, and owes a part of its success to Congressmen. Sir Louis Dane in his speech, when opening the same, has most felicitously referred to the spirit of cooperation that has prevailed in the organisation of the Exhibition between various sections of the community, and I beg to recommend to you the perusal of his speech. I take also this opportunity of thanking Sir Louis Dane, and his officers for their efforts in following a scheme that the Congress originated, and set on foot. This is a pleasant subject to dwell upon but there is another subject, to which I refer with feelings of regret. Extremism which leads to murders of innocent parties must be abhorred. The traditions of the Punjab have been traditions of loyalty, and the Punjabis have always referred to the part they played in over-

coming the troubles of 1857, with great pride. It is therefore all the more deplorable that the name of a Punjabi should have been associated with anarchism. Anarchism wherever found, should be eradicated. It is not in the interest of the Rulers alone that this should be done, but in our own self-interest, because if anarchism ever takes root in our country, the consequences will be terrible to the people themselves.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have laid before you my views on some of the peculiar problems of the Province of my adoption ; and I must now direct your attention to the condition of affairs in the Province of my birth. In the North-Western Frontier Province, the laws and practices, sometimes, vie with the law and practices of the neighbouring country of Afghanistan ; and the people naturally are not quite happy there. I do not propose to take up your time with a narration of the Judicial and *Jirga vagaries*, but I have no hesitation in saying that the administration of that Province requires looking into by a Royal Commission or a Commission appointed by the Viceroy. Why should not that Province have the right of representation on the Imperial Council, when it will have no Council of its own, requires to be explained. That Province was partitioned off in the same way as Bengal has been partitioned, but we took the measures on both sides of the Indus more philosophically ; and for that reason alone, if for no other, we should have more considerate treatment on the Frontier than we have hitherto received.

Let us try to conciliate all wings of the party, and regain our pristine position. Let us have a creed by all means ; but an affirmation, a solemn affirmation if you please, of loyalty to the British Crown is all that is required as the creed of the Congress : because so long as we are loyal to the person of the ruler, and to the laws enacted by legally constituted authority, we may well claim equal rights with the other British subjects. Our ideals should not be mixed up with the creed. They should be clearly stated, firmly agitated for, and should be within the range of practical politics. As to the Constitution,

well the present rules are not sufficient and explicit. They should be put in a better shape, as soon as possible. They had nearly landed us in shallow waters this month, had it not been for the firmness shown by the Reception Committee. If open, frank, real and sincere loyalty to the existing order of things, a loyalty based on the highest considerations of self-interest, be our creed, we need not discuss any United Congress; as about this simple creed there can be no two and different opinions. On other matters we may differ, as much as we like, but if we follow honestly the rules of a regulated civilised society, we need fear no troubles. I leave these observations for your consideration.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I must not tire you any more. But before resuming my seat I must thank you heartily for the patient hearing that you have given me, and I must once again, on my own behalf and on behalf of my colleagues of the Reception Committee, give expression to the feeling of pleasure that we have experienced in welcoming you all here. May our efforts for the good of our people, according to our own light, be successful, is the last wish of your most humble servant.

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In this session 24 resolutions were passed. Resolution I condoled the death of Lalmohan Ghose and R.C. Dutt. Resolution II condoled the death of Lord Ripon. Resolution III appreciated the high appointments of S.P. Sinha as a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council and of S. Ameer Ali as a member of the Privy Council. Resolution IV dealt with the Council Reforms. It said :

“That this Congress while gratefully appreciating the earnest and arduous endeavours of Lord Morly and Lord Minto in extending to the people of this country a fairly liberal measure of constitutional reforms, as now embodied in the Indian Councils Act of 1909, deems it its duty to place on record its strong sense of disapproval of the creation of separate electorates on the basis of religion, and regrets that the regulations framed under the Act have not been framed in the same

liberal spirit in which Lord Morley's despatch of last year was conceived. In particular the Regulations have caused widespread dissatisfaction throughout the country by reason of :

- (a) the excessive and unfairly preponderant share of representation given to the followers of one particular religion ;
- (b) the unjust, invidious, and humiliating distinctions made between Muslim and non-Muslim subjects of His Majesty in the matter of the electorates, the franchise and the qualifications of candidates ;
- (c) the wide, arbitrary and unreasonable disqualifications and restrictions for the candidates seeking election to the Councils ;
- (d) the general distrust of the educated classes that runs through the whole course of the regulations ; and
- (e) the unsatisfactory composition of the non-official majorities in Provincial Councils rendering them ineffective and unreal for all practical purposes.

And this Congress earnestly urges the Government to so revise the Regulations, as soon as the present elections are over, as to remove these objectionable features, and bring them into harmony with the spirit of the Royal message and the Secretary of State's despatch of last year "

Resolution V dealt with the Executive Councils. It said :

"Resolved that this Congress, while regretting that Cl. 3 of the Indian Councils Bill, under which power was to be given to the Governor-General in Council to create Executive Councils to assist the Heads of the Government in the United Provinces, the Punjab, Eastern Bengal, Assam and Burma, was not passed as originally framed, earnestly urges that action may be taken at an early date under the Act to create Executive Councils in the above-named Provinces."

Resolution VI dealt with the Reforms in the Punjab. It said :

“Resolved that this Congress records its opinion that the Regulations framed for the Punjab, under the Reform Scheme, fail to give satisfaction for the following reasons, namely :

- (a) In that numerical strength of the Council provided for in the Regulations is not sufficient to allow an adequate representation of all classes and interests of the population, nor is it commensurate with the progress made by this Province, in matters social, educational, industrial and commercial.
- (b) In that the elected element prescribed by the Regulations for Local Council is unduly small and altogether insufficient to meet the needs and requirements of this Province, and compares very unfavourably with that accorded to other Provinces, not more advanced.
- (c) In that the principle of protection of minorities, which has been applied in the case of Mohammedans in Provinces where they are in a minority, has not been applied in the case of non-Mohammedans who are in a minority in the Punjab, both in the Provincial and Imperial Councils.
- (d) In that the Regulations, as framed, tend practically to keep out non-Mohammedans from the Imperial Council.”

Resolution VII repeated the demand of the Congress for the introduction of reforms in the Central Provinces and Berar. It said :

“Resolved that the Congress desires to give expression to the dissatisfaction produced among the people of the Central Provinces and Berar by the decision of the Government not to establish a Provincial Legislative Council for those territories,

and by the exclusion of Berar from participation in the election of two members of the Imperial Legislative Council by the landholders and members of District and Municipal Boards of the Central Provinces, and this Congress appeals to the Government to remove the aforesaid complaints at an early date."

Resolution VIII reiterated the stand of the Congress on the question of the partition of Bengal. It said :

"Resolved that this Congress earnestly appeals to the Government of India and the Secretary of State for India, not to treat the question of the Partition of Bengal as incapable of reconsideration, but to take the earliest opportunity to so modify the said partition as to keep the entire Bengali-speaking community under one and the same administration.

That this Congress humbly submits that the rectification of this admitted error will be an act of far-sighted statesmanship. It will restore contentment to the Province of Bengal, give satisfaction to other Provinces, and enhance the prestige of His Majesty's Government throughout the country.

That this Congress appoints Surendranath Banerjee and Bhupendranath Basu to proceed to England, as a deputation, to lay the question of the Partition before the authorities and public there."

Resolution IX urged for the protection of the civil right of the Indians living in Transvaal of South Africa. Resolution X desired repeal of the Deportations Regulations. Resolution XI repeated the demand for the Indianisation of the armed forces. Resolution XII recorded the protest of the Congress on the issue of land alienation and other allied laws enforced in the Punjab. Resolution XIII desired Indianisation of the public services. Resolution XIV expressed concern of the Congress on rising prices of food-stuffs. Resolution XV registered the support of the Congress for the Swadeshi movement. Resolution XVI demanded educational reforms. Resolution XVII

repeated the stand of the Congress on the issue of separation of executive and judicial functions. Resolution XVIII demanded introduction of local self-government according to the Scheme of 1892. Resolution XIX desired cut in military expenditure. Resolution XX urged the Government of India to look into the complaints of the people of the North-Western Frontier area. Resolution XXI thankfully appreciated the services of Sir William Wedderburn, Sir Henry Cotton and other members of the British Committee for their disinterested and strenuous services in the cause of India's political advancement. Resolution XXII said about the reappointment of D.E. Wacha and Daji Abaji Khare as the General Secretaries of the Congress for the ensuing year. Resolution XXIII thanked the volunteers who worked in the place of students withdrawn by the Educational Authorities. Resolution XXIV said about the next session to be held at Allahabad after Christmas in 1910.

*The Twenty-Fifth Session (1910)*

It opened in the city of Allahabad on 26 December and continued for next three days. The pavilion was pitched on a plot of land opposite the Fort by the river Jamuna. Taking into account the significance of the 25 years of the life of the Congress, it was quaintly designed with 25 sides and 25 gates with the picture of a President put on each door. It was attended by 636 delegates—202 from U.P., 138 from Bombay and Sindh, 121 from Madras, 85 from Bengal, 39 from Bihar, 27 from the Punjab, 16 from C.P. and 8 from Berar. It shows that the Congress separated the areas of the C.P. and Berar, but Burma remained unrepresented. The welcome address was delivered by Pandit Sunder Lal. Sir William Wedderburn had already been elected as the President and he came over from England "in the hope of surmounting the difficulties that were dividing the National Party, on one side from the Surat trouble, on the other from the wedge between the Hindus and the



Mohammedans by introducing the religious question into electioneering.”\*

### **AN APPEAL FOR PROPER IMPLEMENTATION OF REFORMS\*\***

Sir William Wedderburn, Brother-Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,—It is my pleasing duty, on behalf of the members of the Reception Committee, to accord you a most hearty welcome to our ancient town, which has now for the third time been chosen as the seat of the deliberations of this assembly. I am conscious that the arrangements for your reception, this year, are not what we would wish them to have been. By reason of the great demand for house on account of the United Provinces Exhibition, we have not been able to accommodate more than a few delegates in houses. I fear many of you, especially those hailing from the warmer climes of Southern India, will much miss the comforts of a well-built house, unaccustomed as you are to camp life in the December of Allahabad, but as fellow-workers and comrades in a common cause you will, we hope, generously overlook our shortcomings. We are extremely indebted to the authorities, both Civil and Military, for the readiness with which they agreed to place at our disposal the large plot of land occupied by our camp and we are much obliged to Mr. Hopkins and the Magh Mela Committee and the Committee of Management of the Exhibition for the courtesy and consideration they have invariably shown to us. Our camp faces the Exhibition and the Fort, and

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\*Annie Besant : *How India Wrought for Freedom*, pp. 509-10. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya says that the year 1910 “found a critical state of affairs and Sir William Wedderburn presided over the Congress. The President intended holding a conference between Hindus and Muslims with a view to bringing about communal harmony. Separate electorates were just then proposed to be introduced in respect of Municipalities and Local Boards as well.” *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 45.

\*\*Address delivered by Pandit Sunder Lal, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Allahabad Congress held in December, 1910.

is not far from the Ganges, the Jamuna and the Exhibition. It is, you will be glad to hear, in close proximity to the sacred spot on which was read by the late Lord Canning the great Proclamation of 1858, of the Greatest Queen who over ruled in this world, our late Queen-Empress Victoria on the assumption of the direct Government of India by the British Crown.

Meeting, as we do, at Allahabad, my mind naturally travels back to 1888 and 1892, the two occasions of which the Congress was held at Allahabad, and it is sad to recall that the principal figures of those years are no more. Mr. George Yule, Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee, the Hon'ble Pandit Ajudhia Nath and the Hon'ble Pandit Bishambhar Nath were, as most of you know, among the strongest pillars of the Congress. It was mainly due to the indefatigable labours and the boundless energy of the two last-named gentlemen, who were then at the helm of the Congress movement in these Provinces, that we were able to tide over the difficulties of those two sessions. Our revered friend, Mr. Hume was one of the most conspicuous figures in the first Allahabad Congress, and as it happened, the second was the very first which was deprived of the great benefit of his counsel and direction. Seventeen sessions of the Congress have since been held, and though during these years the Congress has had its admirers and detractors, its spring tides and neap tides, its success on the whole is the greatest tribute to the enduring character of Mr. Hume's labourers for the land he loves so well. He is not here today in person, but without a doubt he is communicating with us in spirit from his distant island home. We, in Congress assembled, send up our prayers for one whom India can ill spare.

Nor can we forget our Grand Old Man, I mean Dadabhai naoroji who, though unable any longer actively to throw himself into the fray still takes the deepest interest in all our National affairs. May he live long to enjoy his well-earned rest in his native land.

I regard it a singular good fortune to find that Sir William Wedderburn is able to be amongst us here today. He

is a hereditary friend of the Indian people. Who does not remember the services of his late lamented brother, Sir David Wedderburn ? Loyal to the service to which he belonged and faithful to the Government which he served, Sir William when he was an official, was no less a friend of the people of the educated classes, as well as of the inarticulate masses—and it is worth recalling that he did not hesitate to attend and give the benefit of his advice to the first Congress, in the very city in which he was still in service.

Of Sir William's work for India after retirement, what can I say which will at all adequately convey what you and I do feel and what every Indian feels ? He has lived what Mr. Haldane would have called a dedicated life. What man, living or dead, Englishman or Indian, has done more than our honoured President-elect for the political advancement and material amelioration of India ? What has he not braved and borne for us and our motherland ? I rejoice to think that the Indian National Congress is to have the honour of having him for its President for a second time, and that honour has been reserved to my city and our United Provinces.

Brother-Delegates, we have sustained a great national loss by the death of our beloved and revered Sovereign, His Majesty King Edward VII, whose reign will be remembered as a reign during which were introduced constitutional reforms of great importance, which will enable our people to be better represented in our Legislative Councils, and as a reign in which Indians were associated for the first time in the highest Executive Councils of the land. King Edward will be known in history as the Peace-maker, but to me he appeals most for his humane sympathies, which knew no race or geographical limits. I doubt if a kindlier heart ever beat within a human breast. I feel that His late Majesty was one of those high beings, very rarely met with, who ever kept before him the lofty precepts of Wesley :

Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,

In all the way you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can.

India, of course, was not absent from the mind of a sovereign so benevolent. Having personally acquainted himself with our people and the country, His Majesty never lost his interest in their welfare and prosperity. He sorrowed in our sorrows, and rejoiced in our joys. He won the love and affection of his Indian people, and long shall we deplore his unexpected death. No section of His Majesty's subjects feels more genuine and deeper sorrow for his untimely passing away, or sympathises more deeply with his consort, Her Majesty Queen Alexandra, than we, the people of this vast continent.

To King George we tender our most loyal and respectful congratulations on his accession to the Throne of his illustrious ancestors. It was not very long ago that His Majesty the King and Queen Mary visited our land. Their kingly sympathy for Indians was a marked feature of their tour. In his celebrated speech at the Guildhall, on his return from India, he pleaded for greater sympathy for our people. The news of his proposed visit to India for Coronation at Delhi, has sent a thrill of joy throughout India. The deep significance of the event is realised by every one, and we of the Congress—the children of British rule as the late Lord Ripon aptly styled us can only express our grateful appreciation of the thoughtful consideration shown by His Majesty for the feelings of his dutiful Indian subjects. The auspicious ceremonial at Delhi will deepen our loyalty to the Throne and our affection and respect for the person of our great Sovereign; and altogether it will be productive of the happiest results. Need I say that our gratification is considerably enhanced by the announcement that her Majesty the Queen-Empress will accompany the King-Emperor?

There has been a change in the office, both of the Secretary of State and of the Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

When Lord Morley took charge of his office five years ago, the feelings of educated India were faithfully voiced by our distinguished countryman, the Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale, who when presiding over the Benares session of the Congress, said in his own choice language :

“Large numbers of educated men in this country feel towards Mr. Morley as towards a master, and the heart hopes and yet trembles, as it had never hoped or trembled before. As a student of Burke, the disciple of Mill, the friend and biographer of Gladstone, will he courageously apply their principles and his own to the Government of this country, or will he, too, succumb to the influences of the India Office around him and thus cast a cruel blight on hopes which his own writings have done so much to foster ? We shall see.”

We have seen, and I think I echo the sentiment of everyone when I say that despite the mistakes made, which cannot be ignored or made light of, Lord Morley's tenure of office as Secretary of State has been a great blessing to this country. He and Lord Minto have, it must be acknowledged, guided the vessel of State with great skill and thoughtfulness during a period of considerable difficulty and complexity. It required no ordinary courage to persist with the far-reaching scheme of constitutional reforms, under the circumstances that prevailed till a short time back, and we are beholden to the two statesmen for elevating the political status of the Indians. The admission of Indians into the Executive Councils is, in my view, the largest advance made since the assumption of direct sovereignty over India by the British Crown ; and if this alone had been done and nothing else in the direction of political advance. I say that Lords Morley and Minto would still be entitled to India's deepest gratitude. But the expansion and reform of the Legislative Councils is not much less important. It is true that the regulations for elections are defective in several essential respects, and in none more than in the class inequality they have introduced, but I would ask you to distinguish between what is a merely administrative matter and

the statutory recognition of constitutional rights, which has been secured. When you approach the question from this standpoint. I am confident you will refuse to join those, happily not large in numbers, who would belittle the reforms. It will rest with us to secure a suitable modification. The new Councils, such as they are, confer considerable powers and privileges upon their members. It now remains for these members to make the best use of their opportunities. It is a happy circumstance that Lord Minto's Viceroyalty will be commemorated in a form inseparably associated with the Proclamation—our Magna Charta.

Gentlemen, I venture to think that it is fortunate that Lord Morley and Lord Minto have been succeeded by Lord Crewe and Lord Hardinge. When we remember that our present Secretary of State satisfied Mr. Gladstone by his administration of Ireland, and was specially honoured by that great man, we may well hope that he will not disappoint expectations at the India Office. As for Lord Hardinge, to whom we accord a cordial and respectful welcome as the representative of our Sovereign, I think, I speak for you all when I say, that the few speeches made by him since his arrival in this country show that he will pursue a policy of economy and impartiality as between one community and another.

It will not be right for me to discuss here any question which is likely to form the subject of a resolution at this Congress, but with your permission, I would desire to bring to His Excellency's particular notice the urgency of certain matters. The first and foremost of them is the extension of education, both general and technical, throughout the land. I am aware that our educational system has received in recent times considerable attention both at the hands of the Government and the public. The appointment of a non-official educationist to the Council of the Secretary of State for India, and the creation of a separate portfolio for Education in the Executive Council of His Excellency are unmistakable indications of the greater importance now attached by the Government to the subject of

public education. Nor are signs wanting which show that the Indian public have awakened to the necessity of responding to the efforts of the Government to further the cause of education. Speaking of the United Provinces, the Director of Public Instruction in a recent report, recorded : "There remains one feature in the events of the past year that calls for grateful and honourable record. The examples of public spirit and munificence of private persons mentioned in the body of this report, are eloquent and living testimony to the noble tradition of pious benefactors. It is here that hopes for the future of education must centre, if its increasing demands are to be satisfied." As an administrator of high rank and position and of great Indian experience recently observed on a public occasion : "The visitor from the west opens his eyes as he travels for hundreds of miles without seeing a single factory chimney. If we want India to prosper we should endeavour to get it studded with factories after the manner of the flourishing countries of modern Europe." I earnestly hope that the subject will receive the attention that its importance demands at the hands of His Excellency the Viceroy and the Member for Education, the Hon'ble Mr. Butler.

The second matter to which I would refer is the separation of Judicial and Executive functions. The introduction of this important reform as an experimental measure was, I understand, approved some time ago. I trust the measure will soon be given a trial in every major province of the Empire.

And if you, brother-delegates, from the more fortunate provinces, would not grudge a solitary reference to a provincial question, I would make an appeal for the early establishment of an Executive Council in the United Provinces.

Brother-Delegates, our President-elect, true and far-seeing friend of India as he is, is anxious that there should be no antagonisms in India, and in pursuance of his mission of peace is promoting a friendly conference which is to be held under his auspices at which Hindu and Musalman leaders will be

invited to be present. He has been so far successful as to enlist the co-operation of three such men as His Highness the Aga Khan, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and the Right Hon. Mr. Ameer Ali. That we of the National Congress with that the utmost success may attend the noble exertion of Sir William, I need not say, for he knows it, and has said so in Bombay. Let any fair critic judge the Congress—its resolutions as well as the utterances of responsible Congressmen ever since the inception of the movement and I have no fear that he will be able to light upon anything anywhere which may be interpreted as making for racial antagonism. Our very first President included among the aims and objects of the Congress "the eradication of all possible race, creed or provincial prejudices among the lovers of the country, and the fuller development and consolidation of national unity." The promotion of national unity finds a prominent place in the objects of the Congress as authoritatively defined in the first article of our Constitution. The question that has given rise to much controversy is that of special communal representation in connection with the reforms recently promulgated. Well, the Congress has ever been for fairness to all communities, as will be seen from the clause relating to this matter in its scheme of Council reform adopted at the great Congress—the greatest yet held—at Bombay, at which Sir William Wedderburn himself presided. That clause was "that whenever the Parsees, Christians, Mohammedans, or Hindus are in a minority, the total number of Parsees, Christians Mohammedans or Hindus, as the case may be, elected to the provincial legislature, shall not, so far as may be possible, bear a less proportion to the total numbers elected thereto, than the total number of Parsees, Mohammedans or Hindus, as the case may be, in such electoral divisions bear to its total population." I ask what can be fairer? And no one of us wants to resile from that position deliberately taken up. My own experience is limited to the United Provinces, in which the relations between the Muslim and the non-Muslim populations have been generally cordial. In all business and social relations the great mass of the mem-



bers of both communities have been friendly. Even in the elections to the District and Municipal Boards, the relative numbers of Hindus and Mohammedans returned (and the great majority of the latter could have been only returned on the strength of the Hindu votes) conclusively prove that Mohammedans have always received a fair treatment. A recent despatch of the Government of the United Provinces states that out of 663 members of Districts Boards, 445 were Hindus and 189 were Mohammedans, of 965 members of Municipal Boards 562 are Hindus and 310 are Mohammedans and this in a province in which the Muslim population is about 1/7 only of the non-Muslim population. Well was it observed in connection with the proposals for Muslim representatives in District and Municipal Boards in the United Provinces, by so distinguished a statesman as our present Lieutenant-Governor, the Hon'ble Sir John Prescott Hewett, that "it would be a pity to disturb the generally amicable relations at present existing between the Hindus and Mohammedans by introducing religious distinctions in the electoral system."

In the local Legislative Council as constituted before the introduction of the recent reforms, Mohammedan gentlemen rarely stood as candidates for election, but out of six candidates returned to the Viceregal Council two (i.e., 1/3rd) have been Mohammedans. The introduction of religious distinctions in the electoral system no doubt tends to create a gulf between the two communities which it has been our earnest desire to bridge over. We yield to none in our purpose of greater unity among the various sections of our composite nationality. We realise and have never failed to realise that such unity is an essential condition of achieving improvements in the government of our country. Nobody will, therefore, rejoice more than we of the Indian National Congress, if Sir William Wedderburn's efforts are crowned with success. Certainly they deserve to succeed.

Brother-Delegates, I fear I have already detained you too long. I know that like me you are anxious to listen to the

address of our venerable President, to whose words of wisdom we will reverentially listen. I will, therefore, now ask you to formally request our President to take the chair and to proceed with the work of session which I hope and pray may be blessed with success.

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In this session 30 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I condoled the sudden and untimely death of His Most Gracious Majesty, King Edward VII. Resolution II offered humble homage and duty of the Congress to King-Emperor George V on his accession. It extended an assurance of its profound loyalty and attachment to his august throne and person as well as its heart-felt joy at the announcement of the proposed visit of Their Most Gracious Majesties King George and Queen Mary to India in 1911. Resolution III offered its warm and respectful welcome to the new Viceroy and Governor-General (Lord Hardinge) and expressed its earnest and loyal cooperation to His Government. Resolution IV urged the appointment of an advocate of the Indian High Courts for the post of Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Resolution V repeated the demand of the Congress for better and humane treatment of the Indian settlers in South Africa. Resolution VI repeated the support of the Congress for Swadeshi Movement. Resolution VII repeated the demand of the Congress for judicial reforms like separation of executive and judicial functions. Resolution VIII desired the constitution of the Executive Council of the Governors in the provinces of U.P. and the Punjab. Resolution IX repeated the demand of the Congress for the implementation of local self-government in the country. Resolution X strongly repeated the demand of the Congress for the repeal of the Partition of Bengal.

Resolution XI said about reforms of medical services in India. Resolution XII desired withdrawal of all repressive laws. Resolution XIII said that elementary education be made free and compulsory throughout the country. Resolution XIV desired the setting up of a mixed commission consisting of the official and non-official elements to inquire into the causes of

increasing expenditure of the Government and suggest remedies for its curtailment. Resolution XV demanded reforms like abolition of the communal electorate system and better representation of the non-official elements in the Supreme and Provincial Legislative Councils. Resolution XVI deprecated the extension of the communal electorate system to local bodies. Resolution XVII desired the creation of Conciliation Boards to take timely and adequate measures for the prevention of communal disturbances in certain sensitive parts of the country. Resolution XVIII desired introduction of constitutional reforms in the C.P. and Berar. Resolution XIX desired reforms in the administration of the Punjab. Resolution XX sought reduction of the cable rates.

Resolution XXI said about the need for the improvement of educational system in the country. Resolution XXII repeated the stand of the Congress for holding examinations for the Indian Civil Services simultaneously in England and India. Resolution XXIII was in the nature of an omnibus document which sought Indianisation of the public services, better police services, introduction of a permanent land tenure system, and cut in the military expenditure. Resolution XXIV demanded the making of a new act for according clemency to the political prisoners. Resolution XXV said that certain proposals to amend the constitution of the Congress be referred to a sub-committee. Resolution XXVI said about the constitution of the All-India Congress Committee for the year 1911. Resolution XXVII thankfully appreciated the services of Sir William Wedderburn, Sir Henry Cotton and other members of the British Committee for their selfless service to the cause of India. Resolution XXVIII said about the reappointment of D.E. Wacha and D.A. Khare as the General Secretaries of the Congress for the ensuing year. Resolution XXIX fixed the next session at Calcutta. Finally, Resolution XXX offered thanks to Sir William Wedderburn for coming over to India to preside over this session.

This session marked the completion of first 25 years of the life of the great national organisation with a record of many

important achievements. Therefore, it was given in the official report of the Congress that it "completed twenty-five years of useful activity and met at Allahabad to celebrate its silver jubilee in the Christmas week of 1990. When the Congress was first held in Bombay in 1885, could its founders have hoped for the brilliant future that awaited it? The success of the Congress is a proof of the fitness of educated people of India for a larger and a really potent share in the government of their country. There is not any single instance of the Congress having taken a wrong view of a subject touching the administration of the country and felt the necessity of changing an opinion once recorded. When it is remembered that as much cannot be claimed for those responsible for the government of the country—that they have been obliged to adopt the Congress view of public questions notwithstanding their manifest inclination to the contrary—that reforms once ridiculed as senseless or unpractical have since been actually given to, no more need be said in vindication of the Congress statesmanship."

*The Twenty-Sixth Session (1911)*

It opened in the city of Calcutta and sat for three days. It was attended by 446 delegates—148 from Bengal, 136 from Madras, 94 from U.P., 26 from Bombay, 23 from Bihar, 9 from Berar, 7 from C.P. and 3 from the Punjab. The most fascinating feature of this occasion was the joy of the people at the annulment of the partition of Bengal marking it out that the long suffering of the Bengali people has been crowned with triumph. Bhupendranath Basu delivered the welcome address. Then Surendranath Banerjea proposed and R.N. Mudholkar seconded the name of Bishan Narayan Dhar for the post of the President of the Congress who took the chair in the midst of loud applause.

**OUR COMMON BOND OF NATIONALITY\***

Brother delegates, on behalf of Bengal reunited, I offer you a most cordial and hearty welcome. In doing so, I do not

\*Address delivered by Bhupendranath Basu, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Calcutta session held in December, 1911.

perform a merely conventional function, where courtesy covers the barrenness of the heart. To the sanction of religion, of ancient custom and tradition is added the pleasure of being able to fulfil under circumstances of no ordinary character the solemn undertaking that Bengal ventured to give to the rest of India this time last year at Allahabad, while other provinces not so advantageously situated as we are, were displaying in view of the Royal advent a unnatural hesitation to accept so serious a responsibility. We welcome you as brethren and comrades, as fellow-workers in the same field seeking to dig the trenches wherein we may sow the seeds of the future : we welcome you Muslims, Hindus, Parsees and representatives of other races of India to the tabernacle we have raised for the worship of our Mother, holier to us, as ancient sages say, than heaven itself, where we gather together irrespective of creed and caste to pay our annual homage to our country, and where we rejuvenate our faith in her, where we renew old and form new friendships, and where above all we learn to bear and forbear ; but gentlemen, to us today this is not all : it is not alone the solemnity of the occasion, the sanctity of religion, the call of duty which inspire in us the ardent enthusiasm with which we greet you to our city : once more Bengal stands united in the presence of all India. Divided by the decree of State, torn by factions, clouded by sorrow, our fair name besmirched by crimes and outrages which we all deplored, we felt ourselves lost indeed. We had taken a solemn vow on the 16th of October 1905, that come what might, we the people of Bengal would not be divided ; but a days lengthened into months, and months into years and our province remained partitioned, we grew dumb with despair. Was that solemn vow going to stand annulled for our sins ? That was the question on every tongue. Then came the announcement of the Royal visit to India in celebration of the Coronation of Their Imperial Majesties ; we had not given up our cause though it looked so forlorn, and every heart in Bengal throbbed with the tensest emotion in anticipation of the Royal boons. That tension happily is now ended ; it has pleased God, after much suffering and tribulation, to hear our prayers, and through His

own chosen instrument on earth. He has proclaimed the fulfilment of our vow. We have passed through the value of tears through the valley of the shadow of death, and emerged into the uplands of life. Our heart is full to overflowing and the sense of a grave wrong redressed lends peculiar warmth to our reception, chastened and sobered by the recollection that this is the last time that we in Bengal shall welcome you to the Metropolis of India.

### *The King-Emperor*

We shall soon be welcoming to our City the greatest sovereign whom India has ever witnessed—a sovereign whose Indian empire extends beyond those ancient pillars which still testify to the greatness and beneficence of Asoka's mighty rule. For the first time we realise through the visible symbol of sovereignty, our close and intimate association with a world-wide empire, and for the first time is opened to us the vista of a long though strenuous career in the onward march of nations: we feel that we are no longer sheltered under the over-hanging arches of the Himalayas, but are being drawn into a great and expansive stream into which flow the tributaries of powerful nationalities; for the first time we feel the birth of a new life, the awakening of a new desire, that if we must take our place in the ranks of men, we must be reborn as a nation, forgetting the seclusion and isolation of days that are gone, forgetting the sharp divisions of caste and creed, and always bearing in mind that we are part of a great whole with which we must harmonise ourselves. His Imperial Majesty is coming to us in Bengal with the halo that attaches to the redress of a great and cruel wrong, and we in Bengal will give him a reception which will not suffer in comparison with any other part of His Majesty's wide dominions. For honoured and beloved as the Royal House of England is by His Majesty's loyal subjects in India, whose love and esteem are based not only on a traditional sentiment of reverence, but also on the noble assurances of just and equal treatment given to her Indian people by the good Queen Victoria more than 50 years ago, reiterated with

solemn emphasis by his late Majesty, confirmed by the presence in our midst of His Imperial Majesty, and strikingly illustrated by the boldness with which he faced a question on the solution of which depended the happiness and contentment of a large section of his Indian subjects, he is today protected not alone by the bayonets of his soldiers and the loyalty of his Indian people but also by the prayers of millions of his humble but devoted subjects in Bengal. To him we accord our homage and welcome not only as our King and Emperor, but as our deliverer.

### *The Queen-Empress*

We also offer our welcome to Her Imperial Majesty who has disregarded the tender but strong ties of home to come out to our country and add lustre to the occasion and testify her love and sympathy for our people. We assure Their Imperial Majesties that though they may lack here the comforts of home, they will not lack the warmth, the affection, the esteem, the devotion and loyalty with which they are surrounded in their own country. The affectionate sympathy and kindly interest which their Imperial Majesties have shown towards India justify us in entertaining the hope that they will be pleased to regard their Indian Empire just as much as their own country and home as the British Isles; and when they leave our country, as alas! they soon will, they will go back, let us hope, carrying pleasant memories of their progress through India, and quickening into stronger life the devotion, the affection and loyalty of their Indian subjects to their person and throne.

### *Lord Crewe*

On your behalf, I also accord our respectful welcome to the Rt. Hon the Marquis of Crewe, the Secretary of State for India. He is the arbiter of our fate and holds in his hands the destiny of more than 300 millions of his Indian fellow-subjects. I had from him the kindest reception in England,

and he heard my story about Indian grievances with grave and gratifying attention. I came back with the impression that the great grievance of Bengal would receive sympathetic consideration, and I felt so strong in my cause, that I entertained no doubt that the grievance would be removed. What a courage which would be rare in any minister of State, and very indeed in one who has to guide and control a powerful bureaucracy, justly proud of its great achievements and past traditions, he advised the Crown to meet our demand, for it was just. I can assure him and those in whose hands rests the Government of my country that no oriental people, much less we Indians, would regard an act of justice as a sign of weakness : on the contrary, the annulment of the Partition of Bengal will be looked upon as an act of supreme mercy to His Majesty's Indian subjects in Bengal and worthy of that great and powerful Government over which the noble Marquis presides : it will demonstrate to the people of India that the Government is genuinely desirous of promoting their happiness and contentment and consulting their interests, that it is not a dead vault of hardened and inanimate concrete covering their life and echoing away into emptiness their hopes and aspirations, but a human organisation responding with sympathy to the wishes and prayers of the people.

#### *Lord Hardinge*

And, gentlemen, our hearts go out to that statesman, lonely and serene, who stands like a watch-tower at the citadel of that Government, who saw the wrong and did the right : no not alone, for round him are the good wishes, the benedictions and prayers of the people entrusted to his charge. Lord Hardinge will leave a name in Indian history comparable alone to Bentinck and Canning.

#### *Loss of Capital*

Gentlemen, our elation at the removal of our great grievance is somewhat subdued by the sense of a grave, but let us hope



not an irreparable loss. Who among us will fail to regard without the deepest emotion that the association of more than 150 years, the memories of a great past linked with names written in indelible characters on the scroll of fame and interwoven with the history of the rise of British power in the East, of which the foundations were well and truly laid in Bengal with the aid of our ancestors, should be swept away in favour of the glimmering phantoms of departed glory, and that Bengal should cease to hold in her bosom the capital of the Empire. There must be a setback to the political and economic importance of Calcutta and necessarily of Bengal. I hope it will be only temporary. I am aware that blank despair has spread in many of our humble homes, if not in the places of the rich. But who in Bengal to whom if a choice were given would refuse ? We shall lose indeed, but let us have faith in ourselves, in our destiny and above all to Him who has heard our prayer and "who stills the raven's clamorous nest and decks the lily fair in flowery pride."

And such as Bengal will be "cabinned, cribbed, confined," she will still be our inspiration, our faith and our love, "fairer to us than the evening air, clad in the beauty of a thousand stars."

But ours will not be the only loss : the isolation of the Government of India away from any centre of public opinion, surrounded only by pomp and ceremony, will be a loss to all India. It will not conduce to the strength of popularity of the Government which will come to be regarded as a secret conclave working in a new sixtine chapel screened by long-stretching partitions of time and space and issuing its edicts through the cold pages of lifeless official publications.

### *Hindu and Muslim*

Before I pass from this subject, may I say with your permission that if the reunion of Bengal has been a great boon, let us prove ourselves worthy of it ; we shall have to conciliate a large bulk of Mohammedan opinion in Eastern Bengal

which, unhappily under influences to which we need not refer, had been alienated from us, and let me hope we shall so conduct ourselves as to unit in one common bond of brotherhood the entire Bengali-speaking population, Hindu and Musalman.

### *Congress Work*

Brother delegates, I have tresspassed. I am afraid, far too much upon our patience in dealing with matters which more or less pertain to my province. I trust you will allow that the exceptional circumstances of the present year were my justification. I shall not however dwell on any subject which may form a topic of discussion and consideration in the Congress : that I am content to leave in the hands of our distinguished President and those who will follow him : but I think as Chairman of the Reception Committee who were partly responsible for the holding of this Congress, I may justly say a few words on the importance of continuing the work of the Congress. It has been said in quarters not altogether unfriendly to us that now that we have got our reformed and expanded Councils, the Congress is no longer necessary. Is that so ? If it was so our labours would be at an end. Let us consider the matter with some little care. It is true that the functions of the Congress may be equally well discharged by the Legislative bodies newly created, or that its ideals have been realised and that the Congress may well disappear in the mists of a receding past ? They who maintain this view are not sufficiently cognizant, if I may say so, of the work of the Congress or its ideals.

### *Its Ideals*

Our principal work is to educate public opinion, stimulate public life where it exists, and create where there is none ; we try to focus into one centre the views of at least all thinking India on matters affecting our common weal, and in doing so we incidentally criticise—I use the word criticise advisedly—Government measures according to them our support where we

think such support is justly due, and recording our protest where we think it is necessary and proper. There are functions which the present Legislative Councils are not yet fitted fully to discharge. But I pass on to a more important consideration. Has the inauguration of these Councils, fulfilled the ideals, and satisfied the aspirations of the Indian people, so that the work of the Congress in this direction is superfluous and unnecessary? The first and foremost ideal of the Congress is to gather into one fold the different elements of Indian life—to prepare the ground for the up-building of an Indian nation. Who will say that it has been achieved? The second great ideal is to gain for the people of India a position in the British Empire consistent with self-respect, a position not of subservient dependence but of comradeship with the rest of the Empire. Has this been achieved? Look at our countrymen in South Africa! Do they receive the treatment of equal subjects of the King? And may I not say, look at us in India, do we possess equal opportunities, I shall say nothing else, with the rest of the Empire? He will be a bold man who will answer my questions in the affirmative. I frankly and readily admit the new spirit in the Government of our country, the dawning perception, a more generous recognition of India's claims; but much work has yet to be done to overcome the dykes of power and prejudice; we cannot be content to recline in vacuous contemplation on the threshold of the present, taking no thought for the morrow.

### *The Indian Nation*

And what of that ideal, that other of uniting India in one common bond of nationality? Many Anglo-Indian observers, some of them well disposed towards us, have held it to be an unattainable ideal. Parted by the great cleavage of two dominant creeds, broken into a thousand fragments by the dividing lines of sects and castes, where is the centrifugal force that will gather the jarring atoms of Indian life round the common centre of a united nation? Differences of race and religion, differences of birth and status running into minuteness which would puzzle an outsider, differences in geographical position,

differences of climate and temperament, differences imposed by nature, alas ! differences created by man—all serve to keep us as under : differences in traditions, differences in ideals, standards, in education, all tend to intensify the division : ancient feuds and ancient hate are hard to soften, and dividing lines of ancient prejudice hard to close. Well may the heart of the reformer, of the Indian nationalist quail before the task. I do not for a moment minimize the difficulties of the task but, though great, they are not insuperable : they need not be magnified beyond their dimensions, and let us not make of them so many bogeys to frighten us into inaction by their impalpable terror.

### *Religious Differences*

I shall deal with these differences in a brief survey. Let us take first of all religious differences. Not very long ago Christian communities in Europe were torturing and burning each other for religious differences which led to much greater mutual violence and recrimination than Islam and Hinduism ever gave rise to India, and at one time the ruling dynasty of England lost its throne because of the antagonism of the faith of the monarch to that of the bulk of the people. The bloody scenes which France witnessed on St. Bartholomew's Eve in 1572 have never been known in India. The Hindus and the Musalmans have lived together in peaceful neighbourliness for many centuries and have intermarried in the past. The religious practices which a strictly neutral Government rightly find it difficult to meddle with and which create bad blood between the ignorant classes on both sides are not such as to be incapable of peaceful adjustment. The native states of India where the Government is not hampered by the same considerations as ours furnish an excellent object-lesson as to how the Hindu and the Musalman can live and work together in harmony and peace.

Hindu reformers in the past had as zealous followers among Mohammedans as among Hindus. Taking the Hindus themselves, an intelligent observer will perceive a uniformity of

practice and custom strikingly similar from the Punjab to Bengal, from the Himalayas to Comorin. The religious ideals and practices, the laws founded on religion are the same everywhere with local variations: they follow the same scripture, and are inspired by the same faith.

### *Caste*

Sects have never acquired in India the acerbity of their Western prototypes. Our Western critics have seen in the connubial exclusiveness of caste a hopeless barrier to the growth of the national idea. No sensible person will defend the system of caste as it obtains in India at the present day; it is undoubtedly an obstacle in the way of our progress, a source of weakness in our social and political life; but bad as it is, is it fatal to the national aspiration of India? Let us take other countries. It is true that, in Europe, the same rigid connubial law does not prevail, but it would be safe to say that inter-marriages between different strata of society, sometimes as rigidly divided as castes in India, are not very common and are certainly looked upon with disfavour: yet such social distinctions have not hindered the formation and growth of the national idea. With all its drawbacks the constitution of an Indian caste is absolutely democratic, and within its own fold the lowest is equal to the highest. Again, as between different castes, though divided by the *jus connubium*, they are united by many ties in common, and in Indian village life even an untouchable has a well defined and not altogether unimportant position; he is called by a name which creates by village custom a bond of relationship in the village circle. In ancient times classification into castes was no bar to the political growth of the people, and Greek and Chinese observers testify to the existence of powerful and well organised states in India: when some great king arose, these various states owed allegiance to a single sovereign, and Ashoka's rule extended from beyond the Indus to the Brahmaputra. It may be too much to expect the disappearance of the divisions which caste has imposed on Hindu India, but these divisions have already lost much of their

sharpness and the time is not far distant when, under the influence of western ideas, caste will cease to be a barrier in social intercourse.

### *Language*

We have again the misfortune of speaking in many tongues which our critics multiply into hundreds counting each variation of dialect as a separate language. We must not forget that the languages of upper India and the Western Presidency are derived from the same common source, both vocabulary and grammar being practically the same, and the Dravidian languages of the south have made very large indents on Sanskrit to enrich themselves. Difference in language quite as marked and much greater than what prevails in upper India and Bombay have not prevented the cantons of Switzerland, further divided by religious beliefs, from living for countries as a confederated nation : but the language question does not present the same difficulty now as it did of old. English has become the vehicle of thought between different parts of India and is as readily understood in the South as in the North by the educated classes, who whatever their numerical strength may be, exercise wide influence in their own provinces, if not outside, through the vernacular press and the platform.

### *Conception of Nationality*

The question at the present moment is not an immediate fusion of the Indian peoples into one common mass, professing one religion, speaking one language. Much as that consummation would be desirable, much as it would appeal to writers of political utopias in considering the question of a politically united Indian nationality, it is today outside practical politics. For the constitution of India as a nation politically, let us not be overcome by the phantoms, which critics interested in maintaining in India the present stage of Government, of justifying at the bar of humanity the position of subordination in which the Indian peoples are held, have raised to blind our

view. The true conception of a nation according to modern ideas is well laid down by a thoughtful writer whose authority is undoubted. With your permission, and at the risk of being a little dull, I will quote him. He says : "what is essential to the modern conception of a State, which is also a Nation, is merely that the persons composing it should have generally speaking a consciousness of belonging to one another, of being members of one body, over and above what they derive from the mere fact of being under one government, so that if their government were destroyed by war or revolution, they would still tend to hold firmly together ; when they have this consciousness, we regard them as forming a 'Nation' whatever else they may lack." For the purposes of realising the ideal which Prof. Sidgwick lays down, we are better situated than many other peoples ; we have not behind us the memories of ancient quarrels, of defeats and successes which the Scotch and English had when they combined : for we have been living now for more than a century under one Government and ancient memories have been forgotten : if race forms a predominant factor in the formation of a nation, we are more closely allied than the Pict, the Gael, the Anglo-Saxon and the Celt. We are certainly better situated than the warring communities which regarded each other as foreigners and enemies and subsequently combined into the great city states of Rome and Athens. The student of history will remember the formation of the Leagues in the later period of the independence of Hellas : and coming down to modern times, we are not so divided, have never been as Italy was prior to 1860, covered by States, Republics and cities opposed to each other with the bitterness of hereditary hate : secular and temporal powers were arrayed against each other in mortal enmity : ruling houses belonged to different races, some Italian, some French, some Spanish and some Austrian, and were in secret league with different foreign Governments. Prince Matternich said of Italy in 1860 that it was merely a geographical expression. In about 10 years' time after that famous utterance Italy became a free and united nation.

*Is India a Mere Name ?*

It has been said of India also that it is a mere geographical expression : but our place has neither been in the past nor in the present merely a few letters on the map of the earth. In ancient times our ancestors had carried their civilisation far beyond the confines of India from the Caspian to the Pacific and had sometimes formed large states occasionally combining India and the regions beyond the Hindukush under one overlordship.

*Common Government*

These are the difficulties with which I have been dealing for the last few minutes. I do not for a moment minimise their seriousness or importance. I should not be doing justice to myself or to you if I were to ask you to treat them lightly. They are serious problems which must be seriously considered, but we must not overlook that we have at the present day on our side many great advantages which other communities who have struggled to form a nation or state had not possessed. We are living under one Government, a Government which has always evinced a strong desire to further the cause of India's progress ; education, communication, sanitation have been matters which have always attracted the attention of the Government and are every day receiving greater consideration ; it is not merely maintained for the purposes of revenue ; it is not maintained for the sole purpose of providing a field where the middle classes of England may earn a living and her merchants a fortune, but is also maintained in the interest of the people, for their general uplifting.

*Royal Sympathy*

And more than that I shall quote the gracious words of His late Majesty from his message to India on the occasion of the jubilee of the great Proclamation showing the spirit of British rule in India :



"The welfare of India", said our late Sovereign, "was one of the objects dearest to the heart of Queen Victoria. By me ever since my visit in 1875 the interest of India, its princes and peoples have been watched with an affectionate solicitude that time cannot weaken. My dear son, the Prince of Wales, who is now in our midst as our Ring), and the Princess of Wales returned from their sojourn among you with warm attachment to your land and true and earnest interest in its well-being and content. These sincere feelings of active sympathy and hope for India on the part of My Royal House and Line only represent and they do most truly represent the deep and united will and purpose of the people of this kingdom."

Therefore, in the realisation of our great ideal, we have on our side the sympathy of our Government, sympathy not expressed in words, but translated into action. The Legislative Councils, I am no defender of them as they stand, halting, incomplete, inefficient as they are at the present moment, are daily tending to create a sense of joint and corporate responsibility.

### *Sense of Oneness*

Take another test Seeley justly observes : "Nationality is compounded of several elements of which a sense of kindred is only one. The sense of common interest and the habit of forming a single political whole constitute another element." We in Congress meet every year, people from the north and the south, from the east and the west of the vast continent of India, to strengthen the forces which lie behind these elements, so that they develop and combine. In the past the great religious reformers, whether of the north or the south, of the east or the west, have been the common heritage of India, and today social and political reformers of whatever race and creed receive unstinted and unqualified appreciation from every part of India.

*Not a Talking Machine*

These indeed are hopeful signs. Then, gentlemen, the Congress has been subjected to a good deal of criticism and I beg leave to refer to one of these criticism shortly. The Congress has been stigmatised as a talking machine. Do our critics, glibly talking of Indian unrest and of the deeper problem of Indian life, whose currents are as well known to them as those of the shadowy canals in distant planets, think that we meet in the Congress undergoing heavy sacrifices, travelling hundreds of miles, bearing great hardships and sometimes, alas! as experience has shown, succumbing to them, merely to indulge in talk? Of the thousands that meet, how many talk? For the few that you see on the platform, how many hundreds and thousands are sitting on the floor patiently watching, patiently working for the realisation of the great ideal? One of our critics, whose work on India has had the honour of a preface from a distinguished Secretary of State, curiously enough finds fault with us not only for our talk but for want of it: he finds fault with us because we do not allow talk upon resolutions which have been discussed for years in the Congress, in public platforms and in the press, and put them from the chair. If he had only known or realised the inner meaning of those resolutions—how much lay beneath the surface, how much of aspirations unrealised, of wrongs unredressed, he would have been less flippant: they are the dumb monuments of buried hopes, more expressive than any speech. Gentlemen, I shall not waste your time by setting myself to the task of lifting the load of biased criticism which must be allowed to roll down into the depths of oblivion. We need not be ashamed of a two-days' sitting, even if it was mere talk, after the lapse of a year to review the situation of all India. I pass with your leave to the consideration of a subject of much greater importance.

*Not Hostile to British Rule*

Would the development of Indian nationality be hostile to the continuance of British rule? To answer that question properly, let us consider for a moment the basis of that rule in

India. There is no question that it is not maintained by the force of British arms but is founded on the willing acceptance of the people. Its history is not a history of foreign conquest dominating an alien and reluctant people. "We should rather say," observes Seeley, "that the people elected to put an end to anarchy by submitting to a single Government, even though that Government was in the hands of foreigners." Look again at the enormous advantages that India derives from the British connection : it becomes a world-power from an isolated corner to Asia and enters once into a potential participation of the powers and privileges of a mighty Empire ; after a long period of rapine, misrule and chaos, we have, in India, something like the *immensa Majestas Romanae pacis* established among a vast population. With the growth of an Indian nation, with the grant of greater autonomy and self-government, the disabilities of our position would diminish and disappear : the presence of our sovereign in our midst serves to obliterate differences that divide a dependency from the ruling country, and once this feeling of dependence is gone, and India is able to join the federation that constitutes the British Empire on terms of equality, bearing equal burdens and enjoying equal rights, there is no reason why she should desire to drift away from a connexion so conducive to her interest. I have no fear, gentlemen, that the India of the future will be less loyal than the India of the present ; on the contrary, I have every faith, not only as cherishing a pious wish, but as a student of history and humble observer of world politics, that she will be bound more closely to England by ties which will be glorious to England and honourable to both : nothing would be a truer cement in the bonds of the Empire than leaving to each part freedom to grow to the fulness of its destiny. The prime minister of one of the greatest colonies of England truly observed on the occasion of the last Colonial Conference in England "that in Australia they had found that the more they were allowed to manage their own affairs in every department of Government and of life, the more attached did the people of that country become to the people of the Mother country and to the British Crown."

*Conclusion*

This then is the work which the Congress has to achieve, the end for which the Congress must work : there is no other institution in India which will help us to attain this end, to realise this ideal of an Indian nationality. Some of the greatest names in India are associated with it. Ranade, Telang, Madhava Rao, Mudaliyar, Tyabji, Ayodhyanath, Bonnerjee, Lalmohan Ghose, Romesh Dutt, Anandamohan, Shishirkumar, and many others whom I could name, have gone from us, but they would furnish a muster roll of illustrious workers of whom any country or nation would be proud. Long separation has not dulled our love or diminished our reverence for the great founder of the Congress, who would be with us today if health permitted and age allowed. To us now and for remote generations the name of A. O. Hume will serve as a beacon light to cheer and guide our course. All India rejoices that it has pleased Providence to yet spare us one whose voice is even now heard proclaiming peace and goodwill in times of trouble and danger at an age when people would seek repose. Dada-bhai Naoroji did not hesitate to come out to this country at the call of duty to preside over the Congress so that his words might heal the wound the country had received. I shall not refer to men who are still with us and able to help us and work with us. Many of them I see around me. I am sure you will not mind my referring on this occasion particularly to Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjee.

With a touching devotion to the cause of the Congress, he has come here to inspire us by his presence today, putting away his great and recent sorrow. I offer to him, my life-long friend, the sympathy of his colleagues and co-workers of the Reception Committee, and if I may say so, without presumption, brother delegates, of the Congress itself. If sorrow shared is sorrow soothed, it must be a source of consolation to him, that all India mourns his loss. If he has lost a wife, Bengalis have lost a mother. Though I do not refer to other prominent workers in the cause of Congress, their names, whether

Indian or Anglo-Indian, are household words in the India of today. Work begun with such a noble purpose and under such illustrious auspices must not be left undone. The great temples of the world have taken centuries to build, and shall we desert an unfinished fane, leaving it to the spreading growth of oblivious memories? There has, at times no doubt, crept into it the noisome weed of discord, but we must stamp it out: and in this I do not despair. The blinding storm of passion and doubt has passed away, and we shall now be able to present united front. In attaining our great ideal we must not forget that India has lived for many centuries a captive in the bastille of the mind whose walls more solid than those which faced the revolutionaries of France baffle us even today, but they must go down; communities must not entrench themselves behind the unsightly and scattered fortifications of caste and creed but must come out into the open and mingle in a common life: our progress may be slow but our steps must always point forward.

In the presence of our Sovereign in our midst we realise the unity of the Empire; must we not also realise unity amongst ourselves? Must that enthusiasm with which we are greeting our King today and for which no parallel exists in the annals of India—unless we travel backwards over the fading footprints of departed time through the dim vista of a legendary past when Rama Chandra made his triumphal entry into Ayodhya, the ancient capital of the Solar race—pass away like the receding wave of the tide leaving no mark behind, or should it not rather be an abiding inspiration uniting us into one fold and one life? I hope it may. I am sure it will. Brother delegates, use a great occasion greatly and justify to ourselves and to the world the auspicious visit of the King. To the Hindus, I would appeal to their traditions of the past: their ancestors had shown a degree of toleration in matters of belief which the nations of the West have to realise; they had shown in their relations with the Greeks an amount of social freedom which we should do well to study. To the Musalmans, I make a more certain appeal; the keynote of their great faith is unity;

the great Prophet preached, in notes whose echoes cannot die until humanity itself is gathered into dust, the dignity of manhood—the equality of man. I almost seem to hear the inaudible and noiseless steps of time marching over the debris of jarring creeds and mouldering memories of war and feud on to the goal of our hopes and aspirations—a united Indian nation. I see the shooting gleams of the rising sun and I feel that the soul of India, silent so long, will yet burst into music like the fabled Theban statue charming the world with its solemn and sacred symphony. I welcome you once again, brother delegates, to the Congress and adjure you to proceed to your task strong in the faith of a great and glorious future for our country.

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In this session 32 resolutions were passed. Resolution I respectfully tendered the most loyal homage to the Throne and the Person of Their Imperial Majesties, the King-Emperor and the Queen-Empress, with the hope that their visit to India would be of leasting benefit. Resolution II offered gratitude to the British Government for the modification of the Partition of Bengal. Resolution III expressed gratitude of the Congress for the creation of a new province of Bihar and Orissa under a Lt.—Governor in Council. Resolution IV repeated the demand of the Congress for the repeal of repressive laws like the Press Act and the Seditious Meetings Act. Resolution V said about the adoption of the Congress Constitution. Resolution VI reiterated the support of the Congress for the Swadeshi Movement. Resolution VII thanked the Government for undertaking work concerning sanitation so as to remove the causes of epidemics. Resolution VIII reiterated the demand of the Congress for the introduction of local-self administration. Resolution IX desired cut in the public expenditure, particularly in the Military Department. Resolution X demanded abolition of excise duties so as give encouragement to local manufacturing industries.

Resolution XI demanded effective implementation of land settlement laws for the good of the agricultural population.

Resolution XII desired provision of elementary education throughout the country. Resolution XIII repeated the demand of the Congress for Council Reforms like repeal of the regulations relating to the communal representation of the Muslims and the increase in the number of non-official members in the Imperial and Provincial Councils. Resolution XIV deprecated the extension of the communal electorate system to local bodies. Resolution XV demanded the separation of executive and judicial functions. Resolution XVI empowered the All-India Congress Committee to suggest further amendments in the Constitution and the Rules with a view to promote the objects of the Congress as laid down in Art. I of the Constitution. Resolution XVII repeated the stand of the Congress for police reforms. Resolution XVIII demanded better facilities for literary, scientific, technical and industrial education in the country. Resolution XIX reiterated the demand of the Congress for holding examinations for civil services simultaneously in India and England. Resolution XX demanded that the province of U.P. be placed under a Governor as in Bombay and Madras and that he be provided with an Executive Council.

Resolution XXI demanded release of all political prisoners. Resolution XXII reiterated demand for the creation of an Executive Council in the Punjab. Resolution XXIII urged that the area of C.P. and Berar be given the status of a province and an Executive Council under a Governor be set up there. Resolution XXIV demanded Indianisation of the military services. Resolution XXV demanded that all the High Courts in India should have the same direct relations with the Government of India alone as the High Court of Calcutta. Resolution XXVI desired employment of the Indians in the medical services. Resolution XXVII desired that the post of the Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council be given to the advocates of the Indian High Courts. Resolution XXVIII desired reduction of the cable rates between England and India so as to give relief to the press, trade and commerce of the country. Resolution XXIX repeated the demand of the Congress for protecting the interests of the Indians living in

British colonies. Resolution XXX said about the reappointment of D.E. Wacha and D.A. Khare as the General-Secretaries of the Congress for the ensuing year. Resolution XXXI thankfully appreciated the services of A.O. Hume, Sir William Wedderburn, Sir Henry Cotton and other members of the British Committee for their disinterested services for the cause of India. Resolution XXXII said about the composition of the All-India Congress Committee for the ensuing year. Finally, Resolution XXXIII fixed the next session of the Congress at Bankipore.

*The Twenty-Seventh Session (1912)*

It opened at Bankipore on 26 and ended on 28 December. It was attended by 207 delegates—67 from U.P. 58 from Behar, 35 from Bengal, 19 from Madras, 13 from Berar, 10 from Bombay, 4 from the Punjab and 1 from the C.P. It afforded the first opportunity for the people of a newly created province of Bihar and Orissa to host the big national gathering and then utilise the opportunity of making its political self expression. Until now, the people of Bihar and Orissa had played the role of a second fiddle by virtue of being a part of the province of Bengal. But now they got the chance to demonstrate their political maturity. The welcome address was delivered by Mazhar-ul-Haq. This session was presided over by R.N. Mudholkar.

**COMMUNAL AMITY AND SWARAJ\***

Brother-Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my proud privilege today to offer you, on behalf of the people of Bihar and Orissa, a most hearty and cordial welcome. Believe me, it is not merely a formal and conventional welcome that I am offering you, but a welcome which is sincere and heartfelt. It is for the first time in its history of over a quarter of a century that the Indian National Congress meets at Patna—the famous Patliputra, once the great capital of the classic land of Magadha. The fact that this great national assembly

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\*Address delivered by Mazhar-ul-Huq, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Bankipore Congress held in December, 1912.



was never invited to hold its sittings in our province, was a blot which we have at last been able to remove. At Allahabad we had the intention of inviting the Congress to hold its session at Bankipore in 1911, but owing to Moharram clashing with the dates of its sitting we had to forego the pleasure of seeing you in our midst. Last year at Calcutta, we took our courage in both our hands, and through the mouth of that eminent and patriotic Biharee, the Hon'ble Mr. Hassan Imam, whom we are glad to see on this platform, invited you to come to Bankipore and partake of our humble hospitality. I say that we took our courage in both our hands, because, to tell you the truth, it was a tremendous responsibility that we were taking upon our shoulders and those of us who have worked in arranging for your reception, know that the anxiety then felt was not in the least exaggerated.

However, we undertook the responsibility, but soon after that, our friend, Mr. Hassan Imam, was elevated to the Bench of the Calcutta High Court. You all know how well he has made his mark on the Bench, and how forcibly he has impressed his personality upon the administration of justice. We, in Bihar, are proud of him, and wish him a long tenure of service, so that he may continue to dispense uncompromising and stern justice tempered with mercy. We wish him a longer life so that after his term on the Bench is over, he may come back to us and work for the good of his motherland. But his absence the Congressmen of Bihar could ill-spare at this critical moment. What was certain gain to the Calcutta High Court, was dead loss to the Congress cause in Bihar. We were left without his able guidance. Well, we submitted to the decree of Providence and tried our best to reconcile ourselves to the new situation.

Our inexperience, numerous difficulties, political and social, and many other obstacles, which other provinces must have similarly experienced in holding Congress sittings, came in our way, and we had to meet them. Trusting in the mercy of God and in the righteousness of the cause, we worked on, with

stout heart and grim determination, and the result is before you. No one is more conscious of the unsatisfactory nature of our arrangements than we are. We know full well that many of you will be put to great inconvenience and discomfort. Many of the little comforts of daily life will be missed by you. Perhaps you will disapprove of some of the arrangements that we, in ignorance of your requirements, have made. Some of you unaccustomed to the cold weather of this part of India,—I don't think we have had much of cold weather—would have liked to live in houses, but owing to the creation of the new province, there has been an influx of people into Bankipore, and houses are not available. Of all this we are fully conscious, but we hope that you in your generosity will forgive us for all our shortcomings. You will accept the will for the deed. No effort has been spared by us to make you comfortable and we have tried to do our best. Next time you come to us, and I hope it will be soon, we will be better prepared and in a position to receive you according to your individual standards of comfort.

### *The Delhi Outrage*

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is with a heavy and sad heart that I refer to the dastardly outrage committed the other day at Delhi. The deed was most sacriligious, inasmuch as it was an attempt upon the life of the representative of our Sovereign. And of all men to pick out for this black deed of contemplated murder, a Viceroy so popular, so sincerely attached to the interests of India and Indian people, a Viceroy who has dared to brave the hostility of his own countrymen in enacting measures that he honestly believed and rightly believed to be for the good of our country! Oh, it is too distressing, too horrible! Imagination shudders at the enormity of the terrible crime. A thrill of horror and indignation has convulsed the land and casts a miserable gloom over our proceedings today. But, brothers and sisters, God is just, and He in His infinite mercy has saved the lives of our beloved Viceroy and his gracious consort. We fervently pray that our Lord Hardinge

may soon become convalescent and be restored to us so that he may continue to rule over us, with that large-hearted sympathy and nobility of purpose which has so far characterised his administration. As to the miscreant who planned this foul and wicked deed, I will not say much. I will only say this, that he may be caught and be given the punishment which he so richly deserves. My heart is too full and I will not distress you and make you miserable any further by expressing my gloomy thoughts.

*Messrs. Hume and Krishnaswami Iyer*

Brother-delegates, during the present year we have lost two really great men who devoted their lives to the Congress cause. Allan Octavian Hume was rightly called the father of the Indian National Congress. His anxious solicitude for the advancement of the Indian people, his absolute sincerity of purpose, and his untiring unselfish devotion to the cause of our progress have given him a place in the history of modern India, which none can surpass and few may equal. His life was dedicated to a noble cause and when the history of the Indian National Congress comes to be written, his will be the first and foremost name among its friends and well-wishers. Mr. Krishnaswami Iyer was another great leader who passed away in the very prime of life. He was a gaint among men. A man of irresistible personality of indomitable will and of unblemished reputation, he had no peer in the land. He made his mark equally in the fields of law, scholarship and statesmanship. The gap made in our ranks by the death of such notable men can never be filled.

*Biḥar*

Ladies and gentlemen, you are meeting today on a ground which is hallowed by some of the most stirring events in the history of India. The whole province is studded with rich archaeological treasures, reminiscent of the glory and splendour of a by-gone era. The city of Patna, under which lies buried the ancient Patliputra, with the magnificent halls and palaces of Asoka

the Great, has during the last 2,500 years played a part which no other city in India has ever played. Its numerous rises and falls have no parallel in Indian history, perhaps not even that of Imperial Delhi itself. Leaving aside what the historians are pleased to describe as the mythological period, we have authentic records reaching into the distant past of the 6th century B.C., giving us an account of the kingdoms of Magadha, Anga, and Vaisali, which may be identified with the Patna, Bhagalpore and Tirhut divisions of modern Bihar. Later on rose the mighty empire of Magadha. Bimbisara may fairly claim to have laid the foundation of this Empire. His ambitious son, Ajatasatru extended it by conquest and built the fortress of Patoli which subsequently in the reign of his son, Uadya, became Patliputra, the capital city of the Indian Empire, where mighty Chandragupta reigned and from where the world-wide edicts of the great Ashoka were promulgated. It was during the reigns of Bimbisara and Ajatasatru that two of the greatest religious teachers preached their doctrines of humanity to the world. The great founder of Jainism, Vardhamana Mahavira, was born at Vaisali in Tirhuti and died at the village of Pawa in the district of Patna. Gautama Buddha, the great teacher of universal brotherhood, preached his mission of love and attained his Buddhahood at the sacred city of Gaya, a city only a couple of hours' journey from here, which perhaps some of you would like to see before you leave our province, I may mention here that the famous Nalanda University, the ruins of which can still be seen and wherein the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsiang, saw more than 10,000 Buddhist monks and scholars receiving their education in the sacred lore, was situated in the modern village of Baragaon, a few miles north of the Rajagriha hills and is also within easy reach.

The city of Patliputra was the capital of such powerful dynasties as the Saisunagas, the Nandas, the Mauryas, the Sungas and the Guptas. The highest zenith to which the city reached was in the time of Asoka, one of the greatest monarchs of the world. His empire included not only the whole of India,

excepting perhaps a small portion of the extreme south, but also what is now known as Afghanistan. Chandragupta, Bindusara and Asoka will ever remain in the history of the world as the three great Bihar Emperors who ruled India with wisdom and humanity. These Maurya Emperors were not only great in arts of war and conquest but also in those of civil government. The civil institutions show to what a high pitch of civilisation India had reached during those ancient times. The municipal, sanitary and fiscal institutions were based on liberal principles and were marvels of efficiency and good management.

In the sixth century A.D., a period of decay set in and we do not hear much of Patna until another Biharee Emperor,—this time a Musalman—Sher Shah, realising the strategic value of the place, rebuilt the city, which through the greater portion of the Mughal period remained the seat of a governor, who was generally a prince of royal blood. Prince Azimushshan, the grandson of Emperor Aurangzeb, improved and renamed it Azimabad, by which named it is still known throughout Muslim India. It became the principal centre of trade and commerce and one of the most populous and largest towns of India.

During British rule the city and the province played a conspicuous part, but the prosperity of the former commenced to decline steadily, and it would probably have become a second rate town had not our king-Emperor by his announcement at Delhi, restored the individuality of our people and province and made Patna once more the capital of a Provincial Government. It was with feelings of deep gratitude and unbounded joy that we heard the announcement. The thanks of our people are also due to his Excellency Lord Hardinge, who, with rare insight and the courage of a statesman, advised His Majesty to announce the change. Our gratification is the more that when these momentous changes were on the tapis an eminent son of Bihar was a member of the Government of India, who as one of the signatories of the famous despatch must have had his full share in shaping the new policy. We are

proud that in his high position he did not forget that he was a native of Bihar.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have entered upon a new life and embarked upon a new career, and no one knows what the future has in store for us. But I am bound to say that we have had a very fair start. We have started with the full machinery of a modern civilised Government. We have a Legislative Council and an Executive Council with an Indian member, and our Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Charles Bayley recognising the new spirit of the times, has publicly asked and is anxious for the co-operation of the people, and I have no doubt that if the administration be conducted on liberal lines and the people be taken into confidence and treated with sympathy and consideration, they will heartily respond to the call of his Honour and will cordially co-operate with his Government. But after all the future of a people lies in their own hands. Character and capacity are the chief attributes which lead to success. Sobriety, moderation, foresight and determination carry a people to progress and civilisation, while rashness, impatience, opportunism and sycophancy mar their advance. The ambition of the people of Bihar and Orissa is to improve their condition, come in line with their more advanced brethren of other provinces and subscribe their humble quota to the building up of an Indian nation. This is our ideal and we hope to work for it, and with the help of the Almighty, achieve it. Much leeway has to be made up, many obstacles have to be overcome, a long and weary road has to be traversed, but we believe that a stout heart and a strong will can triumph over all difficulties. We derive inspiration from our past history, a few incidents of which you will find inscribed on the twenty-seven gates of this Pandal and believe that a people who have produced mighty rulers like Asoka, Chandragupta and Sher Shah and great religious teachers like Buddha, Mahavira and Govind Singh can still make history. And nothing is more opportune, more befitting than that in this the very first year of our new life, you the real leaders of the India people should come to help us with your welcome presence and wise advice and bid us

God-speed in our new career. We do certainly require your advice and sympathy, and we have no doubt that in the achievement of our object all Congressmen throughout India will extend a helping hand to us. Sometimes people charge us with parochial patriotism. Well, we do not only plead guilty to the charge but we are proud of our love for Bihar. However, if the charge is meant convey to the idea that we have no love for India or Indian nationality, then I must say that there is not a particle of truth in it. We yield to none in our love for mother India and we share with the Congressmen of the whole country the Congress ideal, the ideal which is throbbing in the heart of the Indian people.

### *Hindus and Mohammedans*

Ladies and gentlemen, we in Bihar claim for ourselves the unique position of a people who are not troubled with the Hindu-Musalman question. By this it is not meant that every single individual is free from it. In this mundane world such an utopian condition is impossible. As long as human nature is human nature, there will always be people who for selfish ends or temporary advantages or under some mistaken notion, will be ready to jeopardise national interests. But what we do claim is that the heart of the people is sound to the core and any unfortunate difference which may crop up, as it occasionally does, passes away and leaves no permanent mark on the generally good relations of the two great communities. Both are imbued with the same ideal, both work on the same platform, and both try for the good of their motherland. As I have often said before, the solution of this question will prove the salvation of India. This is the question of questions which every true patriotic Indian should try to attack and solve. To me it has been a cause of deep and abiding regret that my own co-religionists have not seen their way to join this national assembly. It is an undeniable fact that Mohammedans as a community have kept themselves aloof and those who have joined, have joined in their own individual capacity. Although in spite of this regrettable

defection the Congress has got on very well, the Congress ideals have triumphed and most of the items in the Congress propaganda have been accepted by the Government, yet I believe that we would have got on better if our Muslim brethren had joined, and made common cause with us in the great and noble task of building up a nation. Then we would have moved on with quicker pace. A people counting among themselves seventy millions of souls and some of the very finest intellects and specimens of manhood, is a factor and a force which cannot and ought not to be lightly ignored. Often have I dreamed of a picture in my mind of three hundred and fifteen millions of human beings with one ideal, one aim, full of determination and enthusiasm, marching on the road of peaceful progress to the ultimate realisation of their destiny. Such a force would be irresistible anywhere in the world. Perhaps the picture is too idealistic for its ever coming to be true. However, its reverse side where seventy millions of people detach themselves from the main group and march in the opposite direction is too gloomy to be contemplated with equanimity.

### *Europe and Islam*

I had despaired of ever seeing in my life the two communities joining hands, but the ways of Providence are inscrutable and I never dreamt that the *rapprochement* will be brought to an end so soon and in such a tragic manner. The recent treatment of Islam by Europe has turned the scales. The sacrilege committed by the Russian troops on the sacred mausoleum of Imam Moosi Raza at Meshed in Persia exasperated the religious feelings of Muslims throughout the world. Sir Edward Grey, the author of the Anglo-Russian Convention, never raised his little finger to prevent the outrage. Then Italy invaded Tripoli, a country peopled wholly by Muslims of Arab descent and living peacefully under Turkish rule. It was a shameless act of brigandage attended by most inhuman atrocities, but this time Sir Edward Grey, with what I can only call indecent haste, recognised the sovereignty of Italy over a country which still remained to be conquered. Then came the greatest blow to



the prestige of Islam, the invasion of the seat of its Khalilite by Balkan States. While Turkey was still fighting Italy, she was treacherously attacked on all sides. If the belligerents had fought purely for territory, the war would not have produced any visible effect upon the Musalmans of India. But these Christian States openly preached a crusade against Islam. It was not a war against the Turks but a war to turn Muslims out of Europe, a war between the Asiatics and the Europeans, a war between the Cross and the Crescent. Then the feelings of the Muslim world rose in indignation against perpetrators of this outrage upon humanity and their religion. It is to be regretted that most of the responsible Ministers of the British Government, including the Prime Minister of England himself, gave vent to their feelings which clearly showed their intolerance of Islam. Mr. Asquith in his Guildhall speech referred to Salonica as the gate through which Christianity had spread in Europe and expressed his pleasure that it was once more in the hand of a Christian Power. There was not a word of regret at the humiliation of England's old ally, Turkey, not a word of sympathy with the Muslim world, but a hope that Constantinople itself might fall and be cleared of the presence of the hated Turk. Read the speeches of Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Churchill, Mr. Masterman and Mr. Acland, and you will find the same exultant tone at the expulsion of the followers of Islam from Europe. This attitude of the British Minister deeply offended the sentiments and wounded the religious feelings of seventy millions of Musalman subjects of his Imperial Majesty in India. Luckily at this critical juncture two factors came in which soothed the ruffled susceptibilities of the Muslim community. We have now at the helm of the Indian Government a Viceroy who grasped the danger and at once handled the situation with tact and sympathy. His subscription towards the fund of the Red Crescent Society greatly conciliated public opinion. He was nobly assisted in his great task by men like Lord Carmichael and Pentland, Sir Charles Bayley, Sir James Meston and many other high European officials. These great statesmen have saved the situation. The latest instance of this sympathy is the opening of a subscription list by her

Excellency Lady Hardinge to enable the Indian ladies to subscribe. The Muslims of India can never forget all this kindness.

### *Hindu Sympathy*

But more, much more than this official sympathy, what moved the Muslim community most was the universal sympathy shown by their Hindu brethren in their dire affliction. It clearly demonstrated the fact that in times of danger and distress the two sister communities of India could still unite. The moral and material support that we have received from them has gone straight to our hearts and conquered us. And in this respect no one has done nobler work than our vereran leader, Mr. Surendranath Banerjea. You, Sir, day after day, in your paper, have soothed the lacerated feelings of poor Muslim brethren, expressed your sincere sympathy with their outraged sentiments and vigorously pleaded their cause. I personally know that the daily comments in the *Bengalee* on the progress of the war, were read by the Muslims of Bihar with eagerness and gratitude. You, Sir, have made a place for yourself in the hearts of your Muslim brethren, a place, a permanent abiding, which can never be shaken by any adverse wind of political controversy. You and my Hindu brethren have done great work. You have brought the Hindus and Musalmans of India appreciably nearer to each other. It is only a question of time when the two will stand side by side on this our national platform and work shoulder for the regeneration of our common motherland. I do not know whether you are aware of the fact, that already a great and powerful party of liberal Musalmans has arisen, whose aims and ideals are the aims and ideals of the Indian National Congress.

It is their firm determination to work with their Hindu brethren. Your sympathy in their hour of adversity has accelerated the work and strengthened the hands of this party. And this is the party which is bound to lead in future the Muslims of India. But I must raise a note of warning. Remember that

this grand work of building up a great and powerful nation may be entirely and irretrievably ruined by one single thoughtless word or heedless expression uttered on the public platform or written in the press. The gentlemen of the press, I implore and entreat to be exceedingly careful how they handle any question which has the slightest bearing upon the Hindu-Muslim problem. It is no use to have a battle royal over insignificant matters such as the post of a deputy magistrate or a sub-inspector of police. The press has great power in doing immense good to the country. It has also the power of doing immense harm. Let its power be utilised for doing good. Some people have the notion that by writing vigorously and strongly on a few appointments or a few nominations of municipal commissioners they are champoining the cause of justice. Nothing can be farther from the truth. They are simply creating dissension where there should be harmony, they are beeding ill-will where there should be feeling of brotherhood and affection. Let these petty things be left to smaller mind who cannot rise above their level. Let us have highest ideals and try to achieve them.

To my Hindu brethren I say, treat your Muslim brethren with sympathy and please do not run away with the idea that all Muslims are hopelessly reprobate and there is no hope for their regeneration. Nothing of the kind. Try to understand them by putting yourselves in their position. I have read of criticisms that the Musalmans of India think more of Turkey and Arabia than they do of India. It is quite true. But have these critics ever tried to understand why this is so? The fact of the matter is that religion is still, as it has ever been in this world, the chief determining factor of the conduct of a man and a nation. And the religion of the Muslims is outside India. Their holy places, Macca and Madina, the Musoleums of all their Imams, Sahaba and saints, are outside India. It is one of the cardinal tenets of Islam that all Muslims, no matter to what nationality, race or rank of life they may belong, are brothers. In their house of God, there are no reserved pews or any places of distinction, and the humblest Muslim will not

give way to the proudest monarch of the world. This doctrine is observed not only in theory but in actual practice. So there should be no cavilling at Musalmans looking outside India. As long as one is a Muslim one must look and cannot help looking outside India for one's religious salvation. What I want to impress upon my Hindu brethren is to have a wider outlook, accept facts as facts, and handle the situation with delicacy and toleration. Indeed, I believe that if they thoroughly and sympathetically understood the position, it would be a source of strength rather than of weakness to the cause of Indian nationality. To my own co-religionists I say, as you are Muslims you cannot but look beyond India, but do not forget your motherland. India has great claims over all her sons and your neglect of her interests is almost sinful. I invite you, nay I call upon you in the sacred name of your motherland to join this national assembly, which knows no distinction of class or creed, no distinction of Hindu or Musalman. I have heard some friends say that the Indian National Congress is a Hindu organisation. I deny the charge altogether. I repudiate it entirely. It may be worked by the Hindus ; but why ? Simply because Musalmans will not come forward and take their proper share. Its ideals have always been national and never sectarian. If the Muslim community have any grievances against the Congress, I invite them to come here and ventilate them on this our common platform. I prophesy that they will find all their grievances chimerical and imaginary and will go away absolutely converted to the Congress cause. But perchance, if I prove to be a false prophet, then we have a safeguard in our constitution to the effect that if a majority of 3/4th Muslim delegates object to a certain resolution being passed, it shall be dropped. Can there be anything fairer than this safeguard in our constitution ? I know and I am confident that this appeal of mine will not go unheard and unanswered. It has already been heard in my own province. Look around you in this Pandal and you will find many Musalmans of light and taking part in our proceedings. Those who are not in the seats reserved for the delegate, are there in the seats allotted to the visitors. Perhaps thinking of the past, they have felt a little delicacy in

openly joining us this year, but they are now as true Congressmen as any of us. Only their body is in the gallery there, their heart is with us on the dais here. I have dwelt a little too long on this Hindu-Musalman question and I have no doubt that I have tired you, but I could not help myself. This is my life-work. I wish the two sister communities to understand each other, have tolerance for each other's weaknesses, join hands and work together. To my mind this is one of the greatest works to which an Indian could devote his life. I have spoken freely and fearlessly. If I have offended any one in this Pandal or outside it, I beg his pardon and seek his forgiveness. I could not keep back my honest thoughts from this great gathering of my countrymen. I may have made a mistake, but I felt a call to speak out.

### *Provincial Autonomy*

Brother delegates, I have already taken much of your valuable time, but with your permission I should like to say a few words about some questions which are at present exercising the mind of the Indian people. The foremost of these questions is that of autonomous provincial Governments as foreshadowed in the famous despatch of the Government of India. Although the plain meaning of the simple words of the despatch has been repudiated by Lord Crewe, the people will not allow the Government of India to go behind their own written words. Secretaries of State will come and go, but the despatch will remain for ever, as a monument to the liberal spirit of its framers and as a sacred pledge which the Government of India always be reminded to fulfil. The recognition of the principle of autonomous provincial Government is a great triumph for the ideal of self-government on colonial lines, which has been put forward by the Congress before the country. No doubt it is a distant ideal and at present the mind refuses to travel the long and weary distance, but a day must come when India as partner and a predominant partner of the great British Empire will be called upon to manage her own affairs. Events are quickly marching towards this consummation. Of course, we

shall have to prepare ourselves for the day by unselfish, strenuous and devoted work. Much of what now passes for patriotism will have to be swept away, the ideas of narrow sectarianism now rampant will have to be eradicated, character and capacity for the due discharge of the great trust will have to be acquired, the vast mass of depressed humanity will have to be raised to a higher level, before we can aspire to the high and proud position of a self-governing nation. Evolution is always a slow process. It is slower in the case of a people who are backward in the ways of modern civilisation. My own ideal of the final constitution of the Government of the country is small Provincial States with complete autonomy and freedom from control from outside in provincial affairs, with an Indian Parliament controlling the general relation of these states and managing the affairs of the whole country, the entire machinery worked under the guidance and supremacy of the British Parliament. I may shortly put it in the phrase, federated states of India under the aegis of British rule.

### *Legislative Councils*

But descending from the giddy heights of ideals to everyday practical politics, we must endeavour to perfect the machinery of our present reformed Government which in my opinion is anything but satisfactory. The reforms that I would suggest are, a non-official majority for the Imperial Council, right of allowing members other than the questioner to put supplementary questions, and greater control by the representatives of the people over the Imperial and Provincial budgets. The Hon'ble members of the Imperial Council will bear me out that on several occasions, such as the debates on the cotton excise duty and the gold standard reserve, many official members were in agreement with the views of the non-official members, but an attitude hostile to the popular demand was taken up by the Government and the official members had to vote against their own conscience. This spectacle of high officials being compelled to vote against their moral convictions is hardly edifying. If we had a non-official majority, such a thing would be im-

possible. The Government need not have any fear of its being voted down on every occasion. It has a safeguard in the representation of different classes and divergent interests, who are not expected to combine on any measure which will injure the interests of either the Government or the people. But if they ever vote unanimously for any measure, then in my opinion it is a positive proof of the fact that that particular measure is just and is absolutely indispensable. Then again a new safeguard will be added, and that is the sense of responsibility that this reform will breed in the members. Members will be more careful of their resolutions and questions than they are now. Of course, the power of finally vetoing the measure will always remain as now with the Viceroy. In respect of the right of putting supplementary questions, it is at present confined only to those members who put the original questions. This procedure is highly unsatisfactory. If the right was extended to other members, much useful information could be extracted and sometimes the effect of a mischievous question counteracted. As regards budget discussions, I must confess that to me they have an air of unreality about them. A cut-and-dry financial statement is presented by the Finance Member and resolutions are moved. But there is no room for improvement. Already the assent of the Secretary of State has been obtained and any attempt to alter is like knocking one's head against a stone wall. The final budget may be debated upon and much valuable time lost in useless talk, but the Council cannot vote. The whole procedure is utterly absurd. What is required is that the representatives of the people should have a hand in framing the budget and not only in discussing it, and that the interference of the Secretary of State for India should be as little as possible. In short, there should be complete fiscal autonomy for India.

Another reform that is urgently needed is the revision of the Council regulations. It is a pity that the Government did not get hold of the opportunity this year of removing some of the objectionable features which disfigure them and have caused much legitimate dissatisfaction. My views on the subject are

well known and I need not repeat them, but what I would urge upon you is not to give up your efforts until these regulations are modified. Without entering into controversial points, I must say that I have always felt the injustice done to the Hindu community in the matter of franchise. While the landholders and Mussalmans have a franchise which is liberal and extensive, the general electorates have merely an apology for a franchise. I look upon these elections more in the light of a means for the political education of the people, than that of anything else and it is unjust that the largest number should have no chance of receiving this education. This inequality has given rise to a bitter controversy which is distracting the country, and it is high time that the matter should be put on a satisfactory basis. As regards special electorates I have often said, do not try to disturb the present arrangements, but oppose the extension of the principle of local bodies. The whole question is a very complicated one and full of difficulties, but in the interest of the country it must be solved. I would, therefore, propose a joint conference of Hindu and Mussalman leaders at an early date. I believe that at the present moment both communities are in a better frame of mind to discuss the question fairly and amicably. After coming to a full understanding, let us jointly approach the Government of India to revise the regulations on the terms agreed upon. And then, I believe we shall succeed.

### *South Africa*

The next question which demands immediate solution is the South African question. Our people in the Transvaal and Natal are treated with unheard of cruelty, and we cannot be expected to sit quietly as long as their status is not improved. We claim, as subjects of his Imperial Majesty and as citizens of the British Empire, the rights of free citizenship. If the South African Government are not willing or are not in a position to settle the question, then we must press our own Government to adopt measures of retaliation which will bring them to their senses. I am sure there are numerous weapons in the hands of



the Government of India, which, if vigorously employed, will open the eyes of the colonists and make them see the utter untenability of their present position. If India is to remain contented, her people must be treated with fairness, and justice and not like slaves in His Majesty's dominions. It is not a question of the treatment of a few thousand Indian colonists in South Africa, but it is a question of principle involving the dignity and self-respect of 315 millions of His Majesty's subjects. Our friend and leader, the Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale, the idol and hero of Bihar, went to South Africa to see for himself the condition of our people there, and I have no doubt that you will hear from his own lips the result of his mission. Let us, under his leadership, agitate for the redress of the grievances of our brethren and vindicate our own dignity and self-respect.

#### *The Public Service Commission*

Brother-delegates, the last point that I should like to touch upon and that very shortly, is the Public Service Commission. The personnel of the Commission has given great dissatisfaction to Indians. Not that they object to the members appointed, but that the non-official element in it is represented by only one member. Undoubtedly, Mr. Gokhale is the most representative Indian that we could possibly have and a host in himself, but the addition of a few more non-official Indians would have made the Commission more representative and given weight and force to its findings. However, we must press upon the Commission four reforms which, to my mind, are absolutely essential for the good government of the country and the protection of our rights. They are the separation of the judicial and executive services, the holding of the Civil Service examination simultaneously in England and India, the recruitment of judicial officers from the members of the bar, and the larger employment of our countrymen in the higher grades of the public service. These reforms have been so often urged from the Congress platform and the reasons for them are so obvious, that I need not detain you by entering into details which I

am sure, will be fully and more ably dealt with by other speakers.

### *Conclusion*

Ladies and gentlemen, I would have liked to say something about a question which I consider as important as any that I have referred to, and that is the question of the introduction of free and compulsory education, but I have already exceeded the proper limit and I must abstain. I once more apologise for any flaw that you may have noticed in our arrangements, and welcome you with hearty good-will to the new capital of the new province of Bihar and Orissa.

Brother delegates, now I invite you to proceed with the formal election of our President-elect, the Hon'ble Rao Bahadur Mudholkar. His life-long services in the cause of his motherland are well known to all Congressmen throughout the length and breadth of the country. His work in the Imperial Council has been of such a character that any patriotic son of India may well be proud of. Though nominated by the Government he ever raised his voice on the popular side and compelled the admiration of the officials and non-officials alike. We in Bihar feel honoured by his presence amongst us, and we are sure that under his able guidance the deliberations of the Twenty-seventh Indian National Congress will be a complete success.

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In this session 23 resolutions were passed. Resolution I condemned the dastardly attack on the life of His Excellency, the Viceroy (Lord Hardinge) and prayed for his speedy recovery. Resolution II condoled the death of the Founder of the Congress (A O. Hume). Resolution III urged the Government to honour and safeguard the interests of the Indians living in British Colonies. Resolution IV dealt with the issue of public services. It said :

“Resolved (a) that this Congress records its sense of satisfaction at the appointment of the Royal Commission on Indian

Public Service, and while expressing its regret at the inadequacy of the non-official Indian element thereon, trusts the deliberation of the Commission will result in the just recognition of Indian claims to appointments in the various departments of the Public Service.

(b) This Congress urges the introduction of the reforms outlined below :

- (1) The holding of the open Competitive Examination for the Indian Civil Service and Public Services now recruited in England simultaneously in India and in England.
- (2) The recruitment of the Public Services as a rule by means of Competitive Examinations and not by a system of nomination.
- (3) The abolition of the division of Services into Imperial and Provincial as now constituted, and the equalisation of the conditions of services as between Europeans and Indians.
- (4) The abrogation of all rules, orders, notifications and circulars which expressly or in effect debar Indians as such from any appointment in any department.
- (5) The removal of restrictions against the appointment of persons other than members of Indian Civil Service in certain high and miscellaneous offices.
- (6) The complete separation of the Executive and Judicial functions and service. The creation of a distinct Judicial Service to be recruited from among members of the legal profession, and a proportionate curtailment of the cadre of the Indian Civil Service.
- (7) The constitution of a distinct Indian Civil Medical Service for Civil Medical appointments and the restriction of members of the Indian Medical Service.

to military posts only, the designation of the Indian Medical Service to be changed to Indian Military Service.

- (8) That closing of all Indian Services to the natives of those British Colonies where Indians are not legible for service."

Resolution V reiterated the support of the Congress for Swadeshi movement. Resolution VI desired increase in the powers and resources of the local bodies. Resolution VII sought autonomy for the provincial administration. Resolution VIII touched the issue of legislative reforms. It said :

"Resolved that this Congress records its sense of keen disappointment that at the last revision of the Legislative Council regulations, the anomalies and inequalities, the rectification of which the previous Congress strongly urged upon the Government, have not been removed. And in order to allay the widespread dissatisfaction caused by the defects complained of, and in view of the experience of the last three years, this Congress earnestly prays that ;

- (1) There should be a non-official majority in the Imperial Legislative Council ;
- (2) There should be a majority of elected members in all Provincial Councils ;
- (3) The system of voting by delegates be done away with where it still exists ;
- (4) The franchise be broadened by simplifying the qualification of electors basing it on education, property or income ;
- (5) The Government should not have the power arbitrarily to declare any person ineligible for election on the ground of his antecedents or reputation ;
- (6) No person should be held ineligible for election on the ground of dismissal from Government service, or of conviction in a criminal court, or from whom security

for keeping the peace has been taken, unless his conduct has involved moral turpitude ;

- (7) No property or residential qualification should be required of a candidate, nor service as member of a Local Body ;
- (8) A person ignorant of English should be held ineligible for membership ;
- (9) It should expressly be laid down that officials should not be allowed to influence election in any way ;
- (10) Finance Committees of Provincial Councils should be more closely associated with Government in the preparation of the annual financial statements ;
- (11) There should be a Finance Committee of the Imperial Legislative Council as in the case of Provincial Legislative Councils ;
- (12) The right of putting supplementary questions should be extended to all members, and not to be restricted to the member putting the original question ;
- (13) The strength of the Punjab Council be raised from 26 to 50 and more adequate representation be allowed to Punjab in the Imperial Council."

Resolution IX demanded that an Executive Council under the Governor with an Indian member be set up in the U.P. and the Punjab. Resolution X demanded that a legislative council be set up in the C P. and in Assam and that the C.P. be placed under the charge of a Lt.-Governor. Resolution XII repeated the demand of the Congress that the Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council be taken from amongst the advocates of the Indian High Courts. Resolution XIII sought reforms in the sphere of education in the country. Resolution XIV appreciated the services of the Government for doing sanitation work. Resolution XV desired cut in the Government expenditure, particularly in the Military Department. Resolution XVI repeated the demand of the Congress for effec-

tive implementation of land settlement laws. Resolution XVII reiterated the demand for Indianisation of the military services. Resolution XVIII said that all other High Courts should have the same relation with the Government of India as the High Court of Calcutta. Resolution XIX appreciated the services of G.K. Gokhale during his visit to South Africa. Resolution XX said that the Constitution and the Rules of the Indian National Congress, as amended, be adopted. Resolution XXI thankfully appreciated the services of Sir William Wedderburn and other members of the British Committee for the cause of India. Resolution XXII said about the reappointment of D.E. Wacha and D.A. Khare as the General-Secretaries for the ensuing year. Finally, Resolution XXIII fixed the next session at Karachi.

### *The Twenty-Eighth Session (1913)*

It was held in the city of Karachi in Sindh on 26, 27 and 28 December, 1913. The pavilion was dignified and well decorated and each of the 16 gates was ornamented with a motto descriptive of the aims and objects of the national organisation. It was attended by 550 delegates—264 from Bombay, 201 from Sindh (members of the Reception Committee), 33 from Madras, 22 from Bengal, 13 from the U.P., 40 from the Punjab, 4 from Bihar and 3 from Canada. This was the first occasion when the delegates from Canada took part in the session. Great leaders like G.K. Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta, Surendranath Banerjea and Madan Mohan Malviya could not be present on this occasion for different reasons. Harchandrai Vishindas delivered the welcome address. After that, R.N. Mudholkar proposed and Baikunthnath Sen seconded the name of Nawab Syed Muhammed for the post of the president who assumed the chair in the midst of loud acclamation.

## CORDIAL COMMUNAL COOPERATION FOR SELF-RULE\*

Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me no little pleasure to have the proud privilege of offering you on behalf of the people of Sind a hearty welcome to the Twenty-eighth Session of the Indian National Congress.

I call the privilege proud because, in spite of the sneer that is hurled at you that you speak not for the illiterate masses, there can be no question that you sum up within yourselves what stands for the best in the intellect, the culture and the public spirit of this country, which, as Lord Morley once reminded the House of Lords, was the Englishmen's only empire.

We welcome you the more heartily because of late it has been ceaselessly dinned into our ears by those, who had been only a little while ago denouncing us as dreamers, as impractical politicians and visionary agitators, that after the Council Reforms, the *raison d'etre* of the Congress had disappeared, its occupation gone, and that it had better pack up and depart, as its functions could be more effectively exercised through the Legislative Councils. Our replies to his unsolicited and disinterested advice are : First, that to close the institution whose activities gave us the Council Reforms would be killing the means through which more reforms may be acquired, second, that, that is not the be-all and end-all of Congress which has other purposes to serve besides. Here the Bengalee, the Parsi, the Madrasi, the Mahratta, the Punjabi, the Sindhi meet together year after year, thereby drawing closer the ties by which the Congress has knit them. They compare notes, take stock of the progress made and the aspirations unfulfilled, the grievances unredressed, consider the wants of individual Provinces as well as the interests of the whole country and plan out the action for the future. Besides, it is only through the weight and

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\*Address delivered by Harchandrai Vishindas, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Karachi Congress held in December, 1913.

influence of this Assembly that we can achieve some of the objects concerning our Nation as a whole. Take for example the acquisition by the Indian people of a status of equality with the other members of the British Empire, the importance of which has been only recently accentuated by treatment our South African brethren are receiving at the hand of Government, and British Indian immigrants of other Colonies are receiving there. Then again it is only at this platform that we can achieve the ideal so dear to our heart, the value of which has been urged upon us by all well-wishers and friends, viz., the welding together of the different elements of our country into one homogenous whole.

The idea of holding a Session of the Congress in Sind was a dream of the late Mr. Tahiram Khemchand, C.I.E., who, if alive, would have been addressing you these words of welcome from this seat. In him Sind lost at the prime of life a leader of great achievement as well as promise. His lofty conception of public life, righteous discharge of duty with a sole eye to the common weal without ostentation and regardless of the plaudits or gibes of the multitude, serve as a beacon light to all the public men of this Province.

After his death we had been patiently awaiting the realisation of his dream as a succession of untoward circumstances year after year stood in the way. That, Sind which dates its connection with the Congress from its birth in Bombay in 1885 when she sent her foremost sons to make up the modest roll of 72 delegates, who constituted the total strength of the First Indian National Congress, should have been so tardy in reciprocating the hospitality she had so long enjoyed, might at first sight appear as a reproach. But those of you, who have kept abreast of the times, will, I am sure, pardon timid and backward Sind if she shrank from so arduous an undertaking while the Congress was passing through a period of storm and stress. However, having received some sort of assurance as to a favourable hearing, Sind went prepared in 1911 and submitted her invitation to the Subjects Committee of the Calcutta Congress



of that year for the Session of the Congress of 1912 being held in Karachi. In some quarters, the Karachi Congress of 1912 was considered so foregone that announcements of the same were already inserted in the newspapers. Nevertheless, in Bihar there appeared on the scene a rival with such formidable claims that we had to give in. So far back as 1910 Bihar had seriously prepared to invite the Congress of 1911 to Bankipore. But having subsequently discovered that the Congress days would be concurrent with Moharrum, a matter of great inconvenience to them, they had to drop their invitation. Having thus been prior in the field to Sind and having further set their hearts on commemorating the consummation of their long cherished desire for the Provincial independence of Bihar granted by the Royal announcements at the Delhi Durbar, the claim of the Biharees to the Congress of 1912 appeared so irresistible that in fairness Sind had to retire from the field. At the same time Karachi's next best claim was recognised and the Karachi Session of 1913 was unanimously resolved upon on the spot. Thus our hope, however deferred so long, has been at last fulfilled. And we are thus now in a position to extend to you a warm and hearty welcome.

### *Sind*

This Province, unlike the land of the last year's gathering, the Chairman of whose Reception Committee with glowing pride could dilate upon the glories of its hoary past, has no antiquity to boast off. It had no Patliputra the capital of India, where Megasthenes resided for some time and wrote an account of the Indo-Aryans of those days and their magnificent Empire, it had no monarchs of world-wide fame like Chandragupta and Asoka. It is not the birth place of great founders of religion like Buddha or Mahavira. It never reared up anything like a Nalanda University. Geographers, who are fond of discovering resemblances, having found on the map some affinity in shape between Africa and India, have named Sind as young Egypt, with which its community of interests ceases with the Nile and the Indus both mighty rivers supplying the life-blood

of the people. Forming the western boundary of India Sind has had naturally to bear the first onslaught of all invaders of India, who all came from the West, beginning with Alexander the Great, the relics of whose passage through Sind still exist. The fort of Sehwan has withstood the ravages of twenty-two centuries and reminds one of the advent of the Great Conqueror. Alexander navigated a fleet of two thousand vessels through the Indus, which was detained by gales for three weeks at an anchorage, which the Greeks call Alexander's heaven, which some historians identify with Karachi Bay—a theory which has been disputed by others who show by evidence that there never was a town on the site of Karachi or anywhere near it until two centuries ago. Sind was the first Indian Province conquered by Mohammedans as early as the year 711 A.D. The latest Hindu rulers of Sind had their territories extending from Multan to the sea and from the desert to the hills including a part of Baluchistan.

Sind enjoys the proud distinction of being the birth place of Akbar the Great, who is always bracketed with Asoka, they being reckoned two of the greatest monarchs India has ever had. Akbar's memory is kept green by his birthday being celebrated in Sind.

On the conquest of Sind by the British in 1843 it was administered as a separate Province with Sir Charles Napier as its Governor. After his departure in 1847, it was annexed to the Bombay Presidency and still continues to be so, although in several matters the Commissioner-in-Sind, unlike the Commissioners of the other Divisions of the Presidency, has been invested with the powers of the local Government. Still the Province possesses several geographical and ethnological characteristics which give her the hall-mark of a self-contained territorial unit. The Punjab has been long casting very covetous eyes upon this Province and urging her claims to an annexation, which became most insistent after the announcement of territorial changes by His Majesty the King Emperor at the last Delhi Durbar. But Sind has set her face resolutely

against all such blandishments and prefers to continue a part of the Bombay Presidency until such time as destiny permits her, to her own advantage, to attain to Provincial autonomy.

### *Decennial Revision Settlements*

Sind being an essentially agricultural Province where no other premier industry has yet obtained a foot-hold in spite of spasmodic efforts on behalf of Textile industries, in the domain of material advancement, we are faced only by agrarian and irrigational problems. The foremost of these problems is the Revisional Settlement. While in the rest of the Bombay Presidency when assessment has been fixed on land it is not revised before a term of thirty years, in Sind it is liable to revision every ten years. And whilst in theory this Revision is supposed to work both ways, that is where produce has increased, in the direction of enhancement of assessment, and when it has decreased in that of reduction, and this is ever and anon urged by Government in defence whenever complaint in this connection is made to them. In practice this revision is practically synonymous with increase of assessment, and the result of this shorter term of revision is more frequent over assessment. And what is worse the conditions of enhancement at each recurring settlement are not defined. The Zamindar does not know on what grounds the state will claim increase at the Revisions. As Mr. Ramesh Chander Dutt has said, "Uncertainty is a greater evil than over assessment."

### *Fallow Rules*

Another land problem that has been agitating us is that of fallow rules. When, what is called, the Irrigational Settlement was first introduced in Sind, a scheme was framed by which fallows were left out of account, and only actually cultivated land was made liable to the payment of assessment. Government knew that large tracts would remain uncultivated every year and the amount of assessment was fixed so high as to cover the loss of revenue on uncultivated lands. Subsequently a set of fallow rules was framed which provided that if a

survey number had not paid one full assessment for four consecutive years it would be liable to assessment for the fifth year and if the assessment was not paid in due course the number would be forfeited. This would appear to be in direct contravention of the understanding at the introduction of the Irrigational Settlement. Although Government say the forfeiture clause is nominal because the land would be restored to the holder whenever he took it upon payment of arrears of fallow assessment, this forfeiture clause in practice works harshly. The excuse put forward in its favour, that it is intended to put down the abuse of idle or bankrupt landlords continuing to hold lands which they have not the means or intention to cultivate, is untenable ; as in regard to relinquished lands it is admitted that if land in occupancy cannot be cultivated or is resigned it may be taken that there is some good reason for it, because experience has shown that it will always be cultivated, provided that there be water and labour available and the soil has become fertile.

It is well known that the Sind Zemindar tenaciously sticks to his land and would not allow an acre to remain uncultivated so long as he can help it.

### *Irrigation*

Our great irrigational problem, which has been ringing in our ears for years, on which reams of reports have been written, portentous conferences held which has gone through the whole gamut of the circumlocution department, is Rohri Canal Project with a barrage at Sukkur. The question has run through the whole process of recommendations from the Commissioner in Sind to the Government of Bombay, from Government of Bombay to the Government of India and from there to the Secretary of State for India. We were all along in hopes that the project would be ultimately sanctioned but only recently the sad intelligence has been conveyed to us that in spite of all favourable recommendations of all the grades of authority in India the scheme has been knocked on the head

in its final stage by the Secretary of State vetoing the barrage and keeping the canal alone. As Sind has a very scanty rainfall it has almost entirely to depend for its irrigation on the waters of the Indus carried through canals. The barrage was intended to harness for the purpose of feeding this canal perennially and in abundance. The news has come so unexpectedly as to have taken our breath away.

### *Karachi*

Karachi, to which the British Conqueror of Sind Sir Charles Napier removed the Capital of Sind from Hyderabad, is one of those modern cities which owe all their importance and rank to their geographical position as seaports, thereby being the inlets and outlets of the trade of the world. From a mere collection of fishing huts like Bombay it has grown up to a city of Mansions, of Halls of great Commercial Houses, of wharves, piers and quays. It has made marvellous strides in the development of its trade and its harbour facilities. It is the emporium of trade for the hinterland not only of Sind and Baluchistan but of the Punjab and Upper India. The figures of her combined export and import trade, when she was first conquered by the British in 1843, were only 11 lakhs odd and now they are nearly 60 crores of rupees. And its harbour from being a mere creek, which could not admit even country craft with safety, has now come to process commodious wharves, along which can be berthed many an Ocean-going steamer. Indeed it is said that there is no port east of Suez where a steamer can be discharged and loaded with greater despatch and ease than in Karachi. However, she is not content to rest on her laurels, but is furiously and restlessly striding along her march of progress.

The transfer of Capital from Calcutta to Delhi and the recently announced Trans-Persian Railway connecting Europe with India have concentrated public attention upon this port. Being nearer to Europe by 200 miles than Bombay, its claims to be the base of the overland route to Europe are superior.

to that other port for Provinces like the Punjab, Baluchistan, Rajputana and the United Provinces, which can be more expeditiously served from Karachi than Bombay, whilst it has been projected as the Asiatic terminus of the Trans-Pakistan Railway. It is these vast potentialities which have fired the zeal of her admirers. One prophet of Karachi's greatness has drawn a chart showing how Karachi "the Star of the East" as he lovingly christens it, is destined to be "the hub of the commerce of Asia from which all the main routes of trade and travel necessarily radiate, and to be the centre of three Continents and therefore the meeting place of all the Railways in the world."

There can scarcely be any doubt, however, as to Karachi's incontestable claim to direct mail service to Europe which has now been recognised on almost all hands, and which it is hoped will be conceded to her in no distant future. This coupled with a direct broad-gauge railway to Delhi will not only be of incalculable advantage to Karachi and the hinterland but bring the Imperial city and the neighbourhood much nearer to the British Isles and Western countries than they are at present.

### *Hindus and Mohammedans*

Having introduced ourselves to you by giving you a brief account of our Province and this city, before proceeding further I pause to take note of a happy change that has of late come over and which augurs well for the future of the country. I mean the improvement in the relations between Hindus and Mohammedans the two great communities of the country. The prophetic vision which the last year's Reception Committee Chairman held forth to our mind's eye of "three hundred and fifteen million human beings marching on the road to peaceful progress with one ideal, one aim, full of determination and enthusiasm." appears, I am happy to observe, within measurable distance of accomplishment.

It is a source of no little gratification—this new awakening that has come to our Mohammedan brethren that the 'progress

of our common motherland must depend upon a hearty co-operation among all her sons and that the Mohammedans must form conceptions of broader obligations and wider responsibilities to the country as a whole towards the nation-building. The adoption by a Council of the Muslim League the accredited body of the whole Muslim community in India last year under the Presidency of H.H. The Agha Khan of the ideal of self-government suitable to India under the aegis of the British Crown was a message to us that our Mohammedan brethren were falling into line with the creed of the Congress. The able Secretary of the League in the address he delivered recently at a meeting of the London Indian Association held at the Caxton Hall explained that : "The study of the poets and philosophers which had brought about a new political consciousness to the Hindus twenty years ago brought about the same consciousness to the Muslim twenty years later." He further said : "It would not do to mistake these signs for an ebullition of Muslim temper which would subside as soon as it had arisen. But these were symptoms of the effect that education on similar lines had produced on two communities living side by side and recognising a common destiny above the existence of separate entities and the "Din" of communal claims. And you, Sir, have set the seal of your approbation on these sentiments by accepting our humble request to guide us in this year's deliberations, for which we are very grateful, though it is historically correct to refer to the two previous Presidencies of the Congress, one occupied in 1887 by the most distinguished and advanced Mr. Badruddin Tyabji ; and the other in 1896 by the well known Mr. Sayani. And I feel no hesitation in heartily responding to the appeal made by Mr. Wazir Hassan to the Hindus to lend every assistance, we can, to the Muslims, for, if the two communities work together, they must march shoulder to shoulder.

It ought to be no purpose of this welcome address to make a survey of the whole political horizon or to deal with those various problems which the Congress has to consider from year to year and which must be left to the worthier hands of the

President and you all. All I need do is to focus your attention on the most momentous topics which claim your consideration at this Congress. Foremost among these I must allude to a reform which for India underlies all other reforms. I feel that it is incumbent on this Congress to respond to Lord Crewe's cordial invitation in his speech in the House of Lords delivered on the 31st July last to suggest Reforms of the India Council, wherein His Lordship proposes to bring a Bill next year. I have no doubt that you will give due weight to the moderate suggestion of our revered and beloved leader Sir William Wedderburn that one-third of the members might be representative Indians to be selected out of those recommended by the elected members of the Viceroy's and Provincial Legislative Councils, one-third officials with Indian experience and the remaining one-third trusted public men unconnected with the Indian Administration. Nothing could be more desirable than to have independent Indian public opinion represented on the India Council, which hitherto being almost wholly recruited from among retired Anglo-Indian officials, constitutes a stronghold of bureaucracy and therefore could hardly be expected to decide without bias questions arising between Indian and Official interests. For that reason the present India Council has proved worse than the old Council of Directors under the East India Company, for, while the latter consisted of only the nominees of the Officials in India, the former consists of those Officials themselves.

### *Judicial and Executive Functions*

No little water has passed under the bridges since the subject of terminating the unholy alliance between Judicial and Executive functions in this country was first mooted, but it still seems, nay, the recent events accentuate the painful impression that we are as far from the goal as ever. From Congress, from platform, from press year in and year out it has been incessantly urged that there could be no greater blot on the administration of criminal justice in India than the vesting of Magisterial functions in Executive Officers. But it



seems as if we have been all along hammering on cold iron or preaching in the desert. In the words of Edmund Burke. "For so many years we have been lashed round and round these arguments. We have had them in every shape. We have looked at them in every point of view. Invention is exhausted. Reason is fatigued. Experience has given judgment. But obstinacy is not yet conquered." It has been admitted by the highest authorities, by witnesses who could never be charged with pro-Congress proclivities, —that the suggested Reform is a Counsel of Perfection. This admission does not date from Lord Dufferin's memorable St. Andrew's Dinner Speech of 1888. But go nearly a century back and you find Lord Cornwallis in 1793 giving in his opinion that Revenue officers should be deprived of Judicial powers. Again in 1861 when the Police Bill was under discussion Sir Bartle Frere, a member of Viceroy's Council, said that the Reform was one which must be carried out sooner or later and that the only difficulty in the way was "prejudices of a long standing." With certain variants you find these utterances repeated time after time. No reply has yet been vouchsafed to the memorial which Lord Hobhouse with Sir Richard Garth, Sir Richard Couch, Sir Charles Sergeant and many other eminent Judges and great men presented to the Secretary of State in July 1899, advocating this reform.

Numerous examples are cited from this platform year after year of the failure of justice and abuse of authority occasioned by the combinations of these functions. Every lawyer practising in Criminal Courts can quote you instances by the score. And yet every kind of conceivable or inconceivable exception is taken to the carrying out of the Reform. Yesterday it was the prestige theory that was being trotted forth with the utmost solemnity and when that exploded, that of expenditure was hoisted up. The hollowness of the prestige theory was apparent from the everyday spectacle of Officers, nay, even the underlying of other departments like Forest, Irrigation, etc., commanding as much power within their spheres without Magisterial powers as Revenue Officers do within their. The

Financial bogey was easily laid by the formation of Mr. R.C. Dutt's scheme for Bengal and Sir Pherozeshah's for Bombay, under which it was shown that an experiment could be made without imposing any additional burdens on the exchequer.

It was very painful to observe how official witness at the Public Service Commission went on bolstering up the existing order of things and pouring cold water on the suggested reform with a persistence worthy of a better cause.

### *Viceroy and South Africa*

We shall be wanting in our duty if we do not express our profound gratitude to the courage of our nobleman, who rules over the destinies of India, for the manly stand he has taken by his Indian subjects in face of unmerited obloquy, in the struggle our heroic brethren in South Africa are carrying on to vindicate the self-respect and honour of their motherland. By his action on the present occasion His Excellency has crowned the series of sympathetic measures he has adopted for the benefit of the people of this country. In Lord Hardinge we have a ruler, the keynote to whose rule is love of Indians and an abiding desire for their political as well as material advancement. In this case Lord Hardinge has rendered a great service not only to the country but to the whole Empire. To all those who criticise His Excellency's utterances at Madras and the representations made by him on behalf of the South African Indians as indiscreet the obvious and conclusive answer is that in view of the glowing prospects held out by the Imperial Government to the Government of India when first negotiating for Indentured Indian labour for the Natal planters in 1859 as shown by the Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale in his Bombay speech, that after their period of Indenture the Indentured labourers would be allowed to acquire land and settle down as free men far more comfortably than as agriculturists in India, His Excellency as a statesman of honour feels it his duty to protest when he finds that the pledges given to his predecessors and practically passed on by them to the parties affected are being trodden

under feet. I consider this to be a most important aspect of the case which brushes aside all the clap-trap about the Union Government being a self-governing body and therefore not open to interference by any body.

Having regard to this circumstance the conduct of the Ministry in not raising even their little fingers to remove the disabilities of the Indians when the Union Act was passed in Parliament is entirely indefensible and is a sorry exhibition of weakness.

There could not be conceived a darker chapter in the history of the Empire that the persecution to which our countrymen are subjected in South Africa which the South African Government openly advocate and unblushingly admit as intended to drive away Indians from South Africa, the whole object being to utilise them as cattle but not allow them to live as free men.

All that is involved in this burning problem has been so exhaustively and repeatedly told that it will be waste of time for me to enter into all the details, specially after the very recent eloquent and ardent expressions of opinion by prominent citizens in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. Suffice it to say that in discussing this subject I would invite your attention to the advisability of advocating retaliation on the lines already suggested and to the great necessity of maintaining the supply of funds to our brethren. Along with this question, I would also invite you to consider the treatment Indians are receiving in other Colonies of the British Empire and whether or not they are entitled to the ordinary right of citizenship and equality of treatment with the Colonials in all parts of the Empire. It behoves us, if we wish our countrymen to have all the rights of imperial citizenship, to support all of them who are scattered over the various colonies in the Empire.

#### *Currency*

It seems to me high time that this Congress expressed its condemnation of the Currency system under which about 40

millions sterling of India's money consisting of Paper Currency Reserve, Gold Standard Reserve and Floating Cash Balances is withdrawn from this country and used in London for loans to Joint Stock bankers, bill brokers and finance houses of that city. In the first place this money earns only 2.5% interest in London, whereas in India it could be lent on 5%. In the second place being in India it would on the one hand largely assist Indian Trade, as one of the crying needs of India now is more capital with which to develop her natural resources, and on the other it would greatly ease the money market and thus serve as a check upon monetary crises like the appalling one we have so recently witnessed. Under the present arrangement not a pie of those stupendous millions goes to the benefit of India. Is our money to be made a football for foreign exploiters to play with? Are the interests of the millions of population from whom the money is taken and whom the currency operations affect to be considered a negligible quantity, while those of a microscopic but clamorous and influential minority to be pandered to? Should foreign trade be financed at the expense of the Indian taxpayers? Moreover, the sooner the scandal of these huge cash balances is done away with the better. This cash balance from 4 million odd pounds in 1907 has swollen to near upon 18 million pounds in 1912. Does not this clearly show that we are overtaxed? The British Chancellor of the Exchequer so adjusts his budget as to be frequently in debt to the city to the extent of some millions, whereas for India the reverse process is adopted of holding these enormous balances in hand so that they may be made use of by the London Financiers at half the rate of interest that would be procurable in India and may help the trade of England where capital is overflowing, and be removed from India which is in sore need of it and whose industries and resources are crying for development.

Further, it is a financial anachronism that the state should do banking business. This anachronism should be ended by the establishment of an independent State Bank to which should be assigned all the banking business now done by the State.

Above all when is India expected to acquire full fiscal freedom ?

Herein I take this opportunity of paying a tribute to Mr. Webb the able and energetic Chairman of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and for long their representative on the Bombay Legislative Council, the crusador of hundred reforms who has been heroically fighting currency battles on behalf of the people of this country at heavy odds and to whom this city owes an immense debt for the part he has played in the development of its trade and in bringing it up to the front rank of sea port towns in India.

Since writing the above I have had a glance at the interim Report of the Currency Commission from which I learn many things about cash balances and other matters said by various witnesses. But I cannot say what conclusions can be derived therefrom, seeing that the opinions vary so much. At the best, further evidence has to be taken and a final report remains yet to be published, when our countrymen shall have the opportunity of learning for themselves how the Currency question stands.

### *Educational Policy*

We must record our protest against the policy of Government under which the appointment as lecturers by the Calcutta University of such three men of learning as Messrs. Rasul, Suhrawardy and Jayaswal was vetoed on the ground of their connection with politics. At the indignation meetings held in this behalf it was rightly pointed out that the bar of politics was so sweeping and so vague that every one of the members of this Assembly or of Legislative Councils or of societies of War Relief Funds could be included in it, which if carried to its logical conclusion, would be subversive of our most cherished privileges. The policy no doubt owes its origin to the desire to keep all kinds of students as far away from the supposed infection of politics as possible. But policies like these have the great drawback of defeating their own ends.

It is hoped that Government will come round to realise the narrow-mindedness of their action.

*Public Service Commission*

He will be a bold man who can, with any assurance, forecast what conclusions Lord Islington's Commission will arrive at. But this Congress cannot but notice with regret the spirit in which European witnesses have given their evidence. Well, human nature being what it is, it would be too much to expect those whose vested interests would receive a rude setback to make any admission favouring the larger employment of Indians in the public services. And hence the Indian, needs, must be condemned as wanting in back-bone in capacity, in efficiency and as having been tried and found wanting.

Of what avail the enunciation of high-sounding principles, promises of equal opportunities without distinction of colour and creed if what is promised to the ear is broken to the heart?

There could, however, be no opportune time than this for the Congress to urge upon the Government the desirability of so adjusting the services as to afford larger scope for the employment of Indians more specially in the higher grades than has been hitherto the case.

*Conclusion*

In conclusion I heartily thank you, brother delegates, for the lengthy and tiresome journeys you have undertaken, Karachi being at the extreme end of the Peninsula from some of you. I have, moreover, to thank the authorities with whom our relations have always been cordial for their readiness for whatever help we required of them. I have also to thank all my colleagues on the various Committees including Seth Isardas Assanmal the Merchant Prince of Karachi for his most munificent assistance and Mr. Ghulamali Chagla the General Secretary to whom most of the credit of organising this Congress is due. I also express gratitude to Mr. Tiwary of the

Servants of India Society who, at great inconvenience and sacrifice, has been long with us and throughout rendered us his valuable advice.

As we are wanting in the resources, the organising capacity and the experience of other cities where Congresses have been held before, there must have been many drawbacks in our arrangements which with all humility I will ask you to overlook and to forgive.

Now I invite you, brother delegates, to proceed with the formal election of our President-Elect the Hon'ble Syed Mahammed, the scion of a noble family who has so steadfastly stood by us through good and evil report.

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In this session 22 resolutions were passed. Resolution I condoled the death of J. Ghosal and Justice P.R. Sundara Aiyer. Resolution II objected to the provisions of the Immigration Act of South Africa and requested the Crown to veto this law. It also repeated the demand of the Congress for honouring and safeguarding the interests of the Indians living in the British Colonies. Resolution III reiterated the long-standing demand of the Congress for the separation of executive and judicial functions. Resolution IV has an importance of its own for the obvious reason that, for the first time, the Congress came forward with the demand of self-rule. It said :

“Resolved that this Congress places on record its warm appreciation of the adoption by the All-India Muslim League of the ideal of Self-Government for India within the British Empire, and expresses its complete accord with the belief that the League has so emphatically declared at its last sessions that the political future of the country depends on the harmonious working and co-operation of the various communities in the country which has been the cherished ideal of the Congress. This Congress most heartily welcomes the hope expressed by the League that the leaders of the different communities will

make every endeavour to find a *modus operandi* for joint and concerted action on all questions of national good and earnestly appeals to all the sections of the people to help the object we all have at heart.”

Resolution V demanded the abolition of the India Council of the Secretary of State for India. It said :

“Resolved that this Congress is of opinion that the Council of the Secretary of State for India, as at present constituted, should be abolished, and makes the following suggestions for its reconstruction :

- (a) That the salary of the Secretary of State for India should be placed on the British Estimates.
- (b) That, with a view to the efficiency and independence of the Council, it is expedient that it should be partly nominated and partly elected.
- (c) That the total number of members of the Council should not be less than nine.
- (d) That the elected portion of the Council should consist of not less than one-third of the total number of members, who should be non-official Indians chosen by a constituency consisting of the elected members of the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils.
- (e) That not less than one-half of the nominated portion of the Council should consist of public men of merit and ability unconnected with the Indian administration.
- (f) That the remaining portion of the nominated Council should consist of officials who have served in India for not less than 10 years and have not been away from India for more than two years.
- (g) That the character of the Council should be advisory and not administrative.
- (h) That the term of office of each member should be five years.”



Resolution VI expressed serious protest at the immigration laws of Canada. Resolution VII emphatically demanded the Indianisation of public services. It said :

“(a) Resolved that this Congress places on record its indignant protest against, and emphatically repudiates, as utterly unfounded, the charges of general incompetence, lack of initiative, lack of character, etc., which some of the witnesses, among whom this Congress notices with regret some of the highest administrative officers, have freely levelled at Indians as a people.

(b) That this Congress begs to express its earnest hope that the Royal Commissioners will, alike on grounds of justice, national progress, economy, efficiency and even expediency, see fit to make recommendations which will have the certain effect of largely increasing the present very inadequate proportion of Indians in the high appointments in the Public Services of their own country ; thus redeeming the solemn pledge contained in the Charter Act of 1833 and the Royal Proclamation of 1858.

(c) In particular, this Congress places on record its deep conviction :

- (1) that justice can never be done to the claim of the people of this country unless the examinations for the recruitment of the superior offices of the various services be held in India as well as in England ;
- (2) that the age limit in the case of candidates for the Indian Civil Service should not be lowered, as such a step will operate to the disadvantage of Indian candidates as well as prove detrimental to efficiency ;
- (3) that the Judicial and Executive Services and Functions should be completely separated and the Judicial Service be recruited from the legal profession and placed in sub-ordination to the High Court instead of to the Executive Government ;

- (4) that such restrictions as exist at present against the appointment of persons other than members of the Indian Civil Service to certain high offices be removed :
- (5) that any rule or order which, in terms or in effect, operates as a bar against the appointment of an Indian as such to any office under the Crown for which he may otherwise be eligible, should be rescinded as opposed to the Act and the Proclamation hereinbefore mentioned ;
- (6) that the division of Services into Imperial and Provincial be abolished and the conditions of Services be equalised as between Indians and Europeans, and that in case the division be maintained, the recruitment of the Executive branch of the Provincial Civil Service be made by means of an open competitive examination instead of by nomination ;
- (7) that in case the said division be maintained, the Indian Educational and other Services be recruited in India as well as England, and Indians of the requisite attainments be appointed thereto both directly and by promotion from the respective Provincial Services ;
- (8) that civil medical posts should be filled by the appointment of members of the Military L.M.S. or I.S.M.D., and a distinct and separate Indian Civil Medical Service should be constituted therefore and recruited by means of a competitive examination held in India as well as England ; educational and scientific appointments, however, being filled by advertisement in India and abroad ;
- (9) that the present scale of salaries is sufficiently high and should not be raised, and further, that exchange compensation allowance should be abolished, as it has been

a costly anomaly since exchange was fixed by statute ;  
and

- (10) that the people of those dominions of the Crown, where they were not accorded the rights of British citizens, should be declared ineligible for appointment in India."

Resolution VIII demanded repeal of the Press Act. Resolution IX said about the implementation of the land settlement laws for the good of the agricultural population. Resolution X repeated the demand for the Indianisation of military services. Resolution XI sought reforms in the sphere of education. Resolution XIV repeated the demand of the Congress that all High Courts should have the same direct relation with the Government of India as the High Court of Calcutta and the Chief Justices of the Chartered High Courts be appointed from amongst the members of the bar. Resolution XIII reiterated the support of the Congress for swadeshi movement. Resolution XIV sought ban on the system of indentured labour. Resolution XV demanded implementation of the recommendations of the Decentralisation Commission for the better administration of local bodies. Resolution XVI demanded revision of the Regulations relating to the composition of Legislative Councils in the country. Resolution XVII repeated the demand of the Congress for the setting up of an Executive Committee with an Indian member under the Governor in the U.P. and the Punjab. Resolution XVIII said about the constitution of the A-ICC. Resolution XIX thankfully appreciated the services of Sir William Wedderburn and other members of the British Committee for the cause of India. Resolution XX thankfully appreciated the services of D.E. Wacha and D.A. Khare on their retirement from the posts of the General-Secretaries. Resolution XXI said about the appointment of Nawab Syed Muhammed and N. Subba Rao Pantulu as the General-Secretaries of the Congress for the ensuing year. Finally, Resolution XXII said that the next session of the Congress be held in the province of Madras.

*The Twenty-Ninth Session (1914)*

It was held in the city of Madras on 28, 29 and 30 December, 1914. The number of the delegates rose to 866—746 from Madras, 54 from Bombay and Sindh, 38 from Bengal, 12 from the U.P., 7 from the C.P. and Berar, 5 from Bihar and 2 from Burma. S. Subramania Iyer delivered the welcome address. Thereafter, Surendranath Banerjea proposed and Nawab Syed Mohammed seconded the name of Bhupendranath Basu for the post of the President of the Congress. He was elected with loud acclamation.

**THE QUANTITATIVE POWER OF THE WILL\***

On behalf of the Reception Committee, I most cordially welcome all, and every one of you, friends and delegates, from the different parts of India to this 29th Session of the Indian National Congress. It is scarcely necessary to say we are meeting on the present occasion under the most exceptional circumstances, having regard to the continuance of the war which involves the very existence of the Empire. Whether at such a time it was not right that this Session of the Congress should be held, formed, as you are aware, the subject of consideration in certain of our circles. The suggestion that the Session should not be held of course proceeded from the anxiety felt everywhere in India, that, during the continuance of the hostilities, nothing calculated in the least to embarrass the administration here or elsewhere should be undertaken and carried out. It is gratifying, however, that the suggestion in question, though it proceeded from the best of motives, failed to find acceptance. Had it found acceptance, we should have, in my judgment, unwittingly made a serious blunder. For, we would have lost a golden opportunity of giving expression in our united capacity as Congressmen to our unswerving devotion and attachment to His Imperial Majesty, His throne and His house at this hour of extreme trial and peril. We should have also

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\*Address delivered by S. Subramania Iyer, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Madras Congress held in December, 1914.

failed to avail ourselves of such an opportunity to make known to the world that we regard with the deepest admiration and reverence the heroic effort now being made in the cause of right and justice, of civilisation and human progress, by the great nation to which we owe all the peace and safety we enjoy. Nay, we should have laid ourselves open to the charge of ingratitude to our protectors in not coming forward to manifest our sympathy with them, whilst they are thus engaged in this holy struggle. Furthermore, our omission thus openly to avow our support to the Imperial cause was likely to be twisted by such financial calumniators of the educated Indian as Sir Valentine Chirol, and others of his temperament, as pregnant evidence of our undisguised disaffection to our rulers and even sympathy with the enemy. There cannot be a doubt therefore that it was rightly decided to hold the Session, and I am sure that what we say and do during this sitting will amply demonstrate that, among His Majesty's Indian subjects, none are more loyal to Him than we, the representatives of educated India ; that none have done more to dispel misconceptions in the minds of the masses due to the war ; that none feel more confident that eventually complete success will attend the British arms and those of the Allies ; and none more fervently wish and pray to the Almighty for such success.

In my addressing you as Chairman of the Reception Committee, I trust I may be excused if, contrary to the precedents set up sometimes by my predecessors, I do not enter into an elaborate discussion of the matters likely to come up for your consideration. A general review of the leading events of the year since the last Congress, as well as a preliminary reference to the actual work at the impending Session, will, of course, come best from the President of the Congress. It strikes me that one, discharging my present duties, may occasionally abstain from entering into a criticism of those matters to be debated by the delegates themselves. For my part, I shall content myself withdrawing your attention to certain matters, which must be borne in mind all interested in the work of the Congress and in the future progress of the country.

The first matter, I refer to, is the greater co-operation of the members of the landed aristocracy in the work of the Congress. Though they may be unwilling to play the role of platform speakers, yet they may well lend their great weight in support of the Congress movement in various ways. It seems to me that, for more reason than one, we should strive to secure for our work the full co-operation of men of this rank in society. First, such co-operation will, at all events tend to disarm the criticism that the Congress movement is not representative of that prominent section of the community, which has a real stake in the country. Next, this section owes to itself and to the country at large, that the members thereof, as a body, should no longer hold themselves aloof from the National work, which has hitherto been done without their full help and support, and from which work they have not failed to derive substantial advantage. But for that work, the right of electing representatives to the Local and Imperial Legislature would not have come to them. Again, they were the first to profit in this Presidency and elsewhere by the important concession secured by our persistent agitation in regard to the appointment of Indians to the Executive Councils. It is then anything but just and fair to ask, that they should freely come forward and participate to a greater extent in what we have been so long doing for the commonweal with no small difficulties to overcome? And, therefore, should not some of the junior members in their families, who have an aptitude for political study, systematically apply themselves, to it, so as to take their due share in the efficient performance of the national works incumbent on all, even more specially on this section of the community. For, no one can doubt the arduous character of the task which devolves nowadays on a delegate here, or on a representative of the people in the Legislative Council. Speaking from personal experience as a Congressman and a member of the Madras Legislature in the eighties, I unhesitatingly say my work in those capacities are as child's play, in comparison with what persons in similar positions have now to do. The variety, importance and complexity of the subjects to be mastered by them require so much study, thought and intellectual capacity

as to make it possible only for a few to adopt such a public career, if its duties are to be ably and conscientiously performed. Inasmuch as the members of the aristocracy possess the leisure and competence so helpful, if not indispensable to the career of a politician, has not the country a pre-eminent claim on them for the valuable services they could render to it ?

The next matter is as to the importance of the improvement of the village life as the organic unit in all matters bearing on the beneficial administration of the country. One now hears much about the renovation of village life. But, in truth is there any such life to renovate ? I think not. The village, as a corporate entity, is not only, as some think, moribund but long since dead. The chief agency in the perpetration of this tragedy, in so far as the Madras Presidency is concerned, has been the Ryotwari system. I say this with all the respect due to the great administrators who have managed to make that system the perfect thing they wished it to be from their own point of view. Whatever the virtues and merits thereof from such a point of view, it is certain that it has operated to root out the very faculty of spontaneous conjoint action for communal purposes on the part of the rural population. This population now only consists of individuals, each of whom, though busy looking after himself, is altogether useless for any common beneficial purposes, except when moved by the official hierarchy within whose grip, as it were, he lives and moves and has his being. Real political progress in the country is well-nigh hopeless, unless and until a radical change is brought about in the existing state of things in the rural tracts. Such change can only be effected by a sustained effort on the part of both the people and the authorities. That a network of village committees, consisting of elected members, existed under the Chola Dynasty in its wide dominions and managed most things concerning the well-being of the local public are facts established by the unquestionable testimony of Epigraphy. That is the talent for rendering similar service is still not quite extinct in the people is shown by what the co-operative movement is daily revealing. And if only that talent is again afforded an opportunity and

scope for its exercise, and is fostered with the care and patience needed for its revival, the good which will follow will be incalculable. Any apparent lack of public spirit in one or other of the sections of the community is, of course, no excuse whatever for not making a vigorous effort to create it. For, let us remember, in this connection that the capacity and qualifications of the next generation will be far superior to those of this generation, having regard to the rate at which we are moving on. As regards this question of village organisation in this Presidency, though it is 5 years since the Decentralisation Commission submitted its proposals regarding Village Panchayats, nothing tangible has been done. A beginning should be made at once, and the best way of doing it will be to put an officer of good standing on special duty, to start these institutions in selected tracts and develop them. Considering the paramount importance of the work, it would not be a bad idea to have a Director of such Panchayats for the Presidency, who would discharge in respect of this branch of public business, functions more or less analogous to those of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies with reference to his own department. Such a Director should be able to move among the people freely speaking their language and arousing their enthusiasm by personal contact and influence. If he be a man truly in sympathy with them, and acquainted with their habits, customs and prejudices, he will have no difficulty in developing the institution, the utility which is concerned on all hands. In short, he will be a veritable protector of the rural inhabitants in the province, and one such is greatly needed. Unless exceptional efforts of the above description are made, things will continue as they are to the great detriment of public interests. The pressure of the daily duties of the Government is such as to leave little disposition on their part to turn to this new departure in the administrative work of the country. It behoves us therefore constantly to keep subject before their minds that it may not lapse in to oblivion.

Nor must it be forgotten, in dealing with the revival of village life, that if we form a village administration, there must



be something to administer. The ryot must be delivered from the burden of past debts by the establishment of such Loan Societies as are working so well in Bombay, and he must be saved from the necessity of incurring new debts by a wisely arranged system of advances, the making of storage Societies for grain, and—most important of all—by much fixity of tenure as may secure to him the results of his labour, while reserving to the state a lieu on such part of the increase in the value of his land, which may be due to communal progress.

I now proceed to say a few words in regard to the suggestion that the work of the Congress came to an end when the Legislative Councils were established on their present footing. This suggestion has, of course, been already rightly and strongly commented on again and again. I advert to it here only to add my emphatic protest against it. Our Congress does not partake of the nature of any of the species of Indian vegetation in which the parent disappears with the appearance of a progeny. The intention of the wise originators of this institution was that, like the Banyan, it should continue to live and nourish the off-shoots taking root and growing round the parent stem. That intention it is our solemn duty to carry out to the last. Each Congress session should be the centre whence the impulse of the spirit of Indian Nationality goes forth at the end of one year to vivify the people during the next. Leaders of thought in the various provinces should meet, as they have done, on a common platform of service to the Motherland, and by rubbing shoulders there with each other, shake off the narrowing instincts arising from their local environments. In other words, these leaders should thus keep their feeling of unity free from the smothering influences of the heresy of separateness, which is as pernicious and deadly in the domain of specialised politics such as ours, as it is in the higher and wider domain of ethics and religion. Nor is this all. No doubt, our Councils have done well during the short period of their existence.

The elected representatives are so using their opportunities as to create a high hope that the interests of their constituents

will continue to be watchfully attended to and advanced. But, at the same time, it should be remembered that the scope of their usefulness as elected representatives is, as yet, very limited. Furthermore, there are many questions of so general and fundamental a character, in relation to the whole country, as to render the meeting and personal conference and consideration on the part of the leaders from time to time absolutely necessary. We cannot therefore but repudiate the view that the assembly of the Congress is nowadays superfluous and mere waste of energy.

No thought of its dissolution can be entertained until we are far nearer to our goal—that of India becoming a self-governing dominion under the Crown. While, therefore, the institution must continue to live and flourish in spite of those who would end it prematurely, it is time that its machinery is remoulded and improved so as to make it really effective for the expression of thoughtful Indian opinion on matters bearing upon the well-being of the whole community and as an instrument for the dissemination of sound knowledge, respecting those matters among the masses. Consequently it is necessary to arrange for the carrying on of our work throughout the year systematically and as a first step towards it for raising the money needed for the purpose. One suggestion as to this is that a body, under the designation of Congress supporters or the like, be brought into existence each member thereof paying a subscription, say of Rs. 25 per annum. I presume it will not be difficult to find in each province a few hundred of such subscribers. The amount collected thus should be used towards the continuous work as just stated, the expenditure connected with the annual meeting being met by special subscriptions raised in the particular province concerned.

The said general fund should be held and administered by a few trustees duly appointed, who should further be clothed with a corporate character by registration under the law, so as to make them really competent to receive and hold for the Congress donations and endowments which, it is to be hoped

will not be long in coming. If we are unable to do even the little indicated above, that would be a confession of absolute unpreparedness to make any sacrifices whatsoever with reference to our political advance. How then can we look upon ourselves with any self-respect, particularly while we are at this moment actual witnesses to the wonderful spectacle of property and the most cherished possessions, nay life itself, being literally flung away as if they were the veriest trifle for the sake of national honour and national existence by all classes and grades among the British people, with whom we hesitate not to claim equality in the Empire? Surely, until we come to learn to emulate to some extent at least such magnificent qualities of those truly gifted people, with whom Providence has so fortunately linked us, all hope of political progress on our part must indeed be vain. And it is this which we should lay to our heart deeply, and I trust we shall not fail to do so.

Now, before passing from this subject, a few words may not be out of place as to the fact that, for some little time past, a certain waning of enthusiasm is observable among the Congress workers. I see nothing very abnormal in this. No doubt, the genesis of the Congress was traceable to what may be spoken of as the first flutter of the spirit of Modern Nationality in this ancient land. Manifestly, the growth of that spirit has to proceed under extraordinary test conditions. To begin with, it involves co-operation on the part of the communities widely separated for centuries by race and language, religion, habits and ideals: and while the aim of these communities had for ages been a state of changeless ease, incessant activity forms, as we know, the dominant note of the new civilisation now overtaking them as it were against their will. Added to this, there is the fact that the surroundings are quite discouraging. For example, some of the influential sections of those whose models we are trying to adapt for our own purposes, instead of helping us with the advice which their experience should enable them to give, take pleasure in throwing ridicule upon our genuine efforts, and are constantly

tyring to misrepresent us and discredit us. It is also to be remembered that this is the very first transition stage in the Congress movement. The thirty years which have elapsed since it began is, as you know, the period usually allowed for a generation. Just think how many of that older class of ardent patriots and able men who rendered yeoman service in connection with the movement have passed away one after another, causing vacancies which have not as yet been filled up by a sufficient number of fit successors from the ranks of the incoming generation. And of the few veterans still left, it is scarcely reasonable to expect the same hard work which they were able to do when much younger.

A slight lull at such a transition period and the supineness attributed to us, which is perhaps due mostly to the elation and distraction resulting from the success that has attended our movement, particularly with reference to the Councils, seem not to be very dangerous symptoms. But we must wake up, and like the potentate who, with a view to his being stirred up to the diligent performance of his daily duties, arranged to be warned every morning that man was mortal, we should constantly remind ourselves of the uncomfortable truth stated by Lord Curzon, with much lively satisfaction to himself, *viz.*, that as yet no Indian nation had come into actual existence. Not even one-hundredth part of this nation-building work has yet been attempted. How then can we relax our energies instead of redoubling them? Renewing our vigour we must go forward with the unalterable conviction that our future labours are bound to be far more fruitful than the little we have done in the past. For, the cause is great and worthy of very sacrifice, and if our watchwords are, as they ought to be, indomitable industry, perseverance and patience, all we desire and deserve will follow as the day follows the night.

I now proceed to the remaining point on which, most likely for the last time in this life, it is given to me to address such an assembly. It trust the way in which I am going to unburden myself about it will not bring on me reproach from any quar-

ter. That point is our attitude to our rulers. This is doubtless an old theme not much liked in certain circles to be discussed. But my justification for presuming to talk to you about it, is the aspect in which it presents itself to my mind in the light of recent occurrences in South Africa. I mean those in which our great compatriot Mr. Gandhi and his devoted band displayed qualities which have secured everlasting credit to them. When their oppressors were themselves in trouble, our countrymen returned not hate for hate but good-will, and thus won immeasurably from the moral point of view, however small their success may have otherwise turned out to have been. This event has lessons for all concerned. The chief among them for us in what bears upon the question of the attitude that I just spoke of. Now, the precise lesson which the said Colonial episode conveys in the present connection is that our attitude to the rulers should be one of perfect inward friendliness even under the most trying circumstances. In thus asking our people, in their ordinary political life and relations, virtually to give effect to that supreme teaching given 25 centuries back, that "hatred ceaseth not by hatred, it ceaseth by love," it may seem to many even in this land, where it was so taught, that I am making an extravagant if not an impossible demand; especially so when one thinks of how what we believe to be our common rights as loyal subjects of His Majesty and citizens of the Empire, have been denied to us with impunity. But that demand is no other than that which our peculiar circumstances warrant will be seen if the part India has yet to play in the Empire is properly understood. That part I venture to submit is quite special. In a word, it is no less than that of a teacher. Startling as this statement may seem to some, I feel there is a truth in it which makes it right for me to place it before you. I do so the more willingly, since to us, as earnest and humble workers wishing to take part in the great task of nation-building here, nothing is more important than that we should have before us with reference to that work, a characteristic ideal which our inherent tendencies point out as fairly capable of realisation.

Now, there is surely no *a priori* improbability in the supposition that this cradle of the eldest branch of the Aryan race will reach the front again, and its children once more become the chosen instrument for the spread of some great fragments of ancient wisdom among the children of the younger branches, who, while great in their own way and custodians of much other knowledge of the utmost value to all, have yet to learn those fragments from the right quarter and in due time. Though, as I have had occasion to say, no Indian nation is actually in existence, and though only the first throb of its life has as yet been felt, there are cogent reasons for thinking that its evolution will be on a line *sui generis*. Now let it be remembered that we, the teeming millions of this continent-like country, are by the iron hand of the all-engrossing white races effectually barred from attempting to bound colonies—as our forefathers did and of which traces are so to be found even now in such distant islands as the Philippines and Java—in any of the boundless unoccupied regions of the earth, and are thereby rendered incapable of developing the qualities such new foundation would call into play.

That, whilst so shut out from growth outside our own birth-place, we possess in a remarkable degree an aptitude for quick and orderly progress, that we are keen in intellect, and inoffensive and deeply religious in our nature—these facts cannot admit of doubt. Nor can there be a question that these high natural endowments are being diligently cultivated under the rule which is steadily wielding us into a great and unique unit, socially, economically and politically. In such circumstances, does it not stand to reason that in our collective capacity we must have some higher work to do than money-making and such other ordinary pursuits, absolutely necessary though these latter are? What then that higher work of ours is, is a question which will occur to any reflecting mind. And what better answer to it is discoverable in our surroundings than the one I have made bold to suggest? Such being the case, the next question will be: Of what nature is our way to this higher work of ours, to our higher destiny? The obvious reply is that in the

course of things it will be narrow and not smooth. In treading so special a path anywhere, we should have to guard against all stimulation of that brute nature inherent in man which, sad to say, makes persecution almost a pastime for mankind. Humanity claims to be in the van-guard of progress, yet hunts out helpless fellow-subjects, seeking but a bare livelihood by the sweat of the brow, as if they were animals fit only for chase, as if the very sight of them were unbearable, and their presence a pestilence. We are, however, treading the path on a soil hallowed by the glorious teaching of the Master of Compassion Gautama the Buddha. We have therefore much more to do than only keep our animal and selfish propensities in check. We have to assimilate among other things that vital teaching of the Master, as to the power of love over hate, meant alike for ordinary men and women, for nations and communities, and for humanity at large. We have to grasp that the divine quality of the former imperatively demands the full recognition of the essential unity of all life—human life in particular—while hate, as the denial of that unity, is injustice pure and simple, the un-failing source of misery and pain.

Lastly, we have to live up to this noble teaching and, by the example of our life, inculcate it among that erring section of our brethren who, giddy with their new prosperity, mistake the colour of the skin for the hall-mark of the soul, trample on older people as if they were an inferior creation, and unmindful of the duty owing to those gentler folk, scruple not to turn the advantages of race and country towards the gratification of their own selfish ends. Such in my humble judgment is the special work that lies before us in the not very distant future. For, at this hour of the world's travail, no other Eastern people, are quite as available as we are for the task of carrying the light whichever has to travel from the east to the west. As for the bright and sprightly children of the land of the Rising Sun, they have but just put their hands to the great interesting game of Orient *versus* Occident and will take some time before it is played to a destined point. And until then these versatile children cannot be spared for any other work. As for the at-

present unwieldy and immobile followers of Confucius, they have apparently much untoward Karma to work out, before they can be thought fit for fresh good work. But we who come next geographically have manifestly done with the evil side of our Karma. We have done that by severe penances in the shape of much blood-letting for centuries and by the deepest meditations on the vanities of mere appearance and on the profundities of reality. And so there was no choice left to the spirit of history but to select us as the instrument in more senses than one for repeating itself.

But in doing so and sounding out once more the message of good-will amongst men that spirit happily for us is going to introduce a decided improvement in its procedure and unlike the chosen race on the last occasion in Palestine we shall have the privilege of standing compacted into a mighty whole and taking our rightful place among the nations of the earth within the Empire, which is the regenerator of ancient peoples, the champion and defender of the weak and the oppressed and the firm unholder of loftiest ideals in the great art of Sovereignty and Government. It is then we who shall make our beloved Aryavarta the brightest jewel in the Imperial Crown in reality as it is only now in name, shall make it such not so much by the splendour of its material wealth as first by the absence in us of that devouring greed for the exploitation of all the sunny spots on earth to which must be traced the origin of the 20th century Huns, that latest variety in the western human species, and next by the presence of unbounded compassion, brotherliness and peacefulness born of that clear vision of man's spiritual nature which is never allowed to be totally lost in the east, and in general by the superiority and excellence of culture of the head and heart, in every way so as to make these traits the earmark of our contribution to the civilisation of the world at this epoch of its history. Let us then with all earnestness strive towards our goal seeking all the perfections that would befit it including the one desired by every lover of the Motherland, I mean the martial development which is as indispensable to a nation as physical culture is to an individual.



For surely without the one and other, neither the nation nor the individual can respectively exist in the condition of health and vigour, efficiency and virility which is the birth-right of both ; towards which end the formation of regiments of Indian volunteers and greater liberty as to the possession of arms are among the necessary steps. It must be obvious to all that the possession of military capacity by His Majesty's Indian subjects on an adequate scale cannot but prove a real source of strength to the Empire itself. But at the same time it must be remembered that in seeking however the above *sine qua non* for the fullness of national life, it will not come until we inspire the implicit confidence that what is so capable of misuse in unwise hands will ever be absolutely safe in our own. And it is as to this specially that the South African incident, more than once alluded to, will be found to possess a very real significance. For what can conduce more materially towards the arousing of the confidence just mentioned than the attitude of our countrymen, the sterling value of which was so strikingly illustrated by that incident—an attitude of perfect amity and friendliness buoyed up by an invincible faith in the ultimate triumph of justice. It was their attitude which, to be sure, made it possible for our gracious Viceroy to raise his sympathetic voice at the hour of the greatest peril to our cause. And it was this same conduct that made it impossible even for the obdurate Colonial autocracy to allow the situation to remain the scandal to the boasted civilisation of the west that it had been for months and months.

Another phase of the moral to be drawn from the incident, I have been commenting on, refers to the quantitative power of the will, if I may so express it. Amplified a little, it is this : if the will of a handful of resolute men, exerted without overt acts of violence or injury, has enabled them successfully to resist gigantic tyranny and wrong, by compelling an unwilling public opinion, as it were throughout the civilised world, to cast its vote in favour of the oppressed passive resisters, what cannot the will of hundreds of millions of our people accomplish by its own sheer force, without the least resort to any

militancy if organised and turned towards the attainment of our legitimate national aims and aspirations ? It is only, when that is a fact and an actuality, that our adolescence will be reached and the ills to which infancy exposes us cease. Try then to hasten the advent of this worthy adolescence. Try it by forgetting differences, and dropping every trait which will tend to divide. In a word, unite and unify. But now pause for a moment to consider whether this is anything more than the old tale of a quantity of faggots having to be bound together in order to become unbreakable. Simple as this thought is and old as these hills, how difficult is it to act upon ! Is it not because, at the bottom of it all, lies concealed hate in its subtlest form ? What else but hate makes for the conflict between the Muslim and the Hindu, the Brahman and the Panchama, the Andhra and Tamil, the white-man and the coloured ? How are we otherwise to account for this sort of religious hate, caste or social hate, language hate and colour hate which last bids fare to beat the first in its ferocity and frenzy at their very height in the past ? Surely this was why the sublime teaching 'hate ceaseth not by hate but by love' was vouchsafed through supreme wisdom. Pray and reject not that teaching as Utopian, unpractical, and unrealisable. For it was realised, as already stated, to perfection in the midst of famine and unspeakable suffering by our own countrymen. Let us then profit by that unique object lesson ; unite and reap the manifold blessings which will follow in its train. Friends, these are a few of the thoughts suggested by the memorable episode which has tempted me to inflict upon you so wearisome a talk.

I would here most gladly conclude but that in justice to the difficult subject, which I have taken upon myself to drag into discussion, I feel I ought lightly to touch upon a couple of objections which may occur to certain matter of fact minds. One of them, may be that if my advice under this last head is to be followed, it could not be only for the ethical considerations urged. The first answer is that such considerations cannot be left by us quite in the cold in judging of the question ; for if it were right for us to do so, it will be equally right for the

other party ; and yet many of the important claims we make on that party more or less involve those very considerations. The next answer is that apart from all such considerations the attitude advocated will possess the very special merit of a high expediency which cannot but weigh with all. For it will not only day by day tend to bridge the gulf that would otherwise continue to widen but will also appeal, as nothing could, to the conscience of the great bulk of the nation which holds in its hands our entire future ; and it will readily evoke from those powerful hands that response which alone can complete the stupendous good work already done by England for us. The other objection to be noticed will proceed from those who argue that I have vainly raised this controversy without anything in the existing conditions which calls for it.

I would say to these friends that they would be quite right but for the grave situation which has been created by the thorny subject of colour prejudice so much in evidence for some time past. Though this trouble began and was at first confined to a part of one of the Colonies, yet it has managed to spread all round, and has even found its way to some extent into the very heart of the Empire. Its effect naturally on the temper of our people has been such as to make one apprehend that unless the prejudice is kept in check by rightful means, it will, as time goes on, result in much racial disharmony here and elsewhere. We must however not be wanting in discrimination as regards the responsibility of Central Government in the matter. However clear and unquestionable from the point of mere theory and abstract justice our right of emigration into the colonies and equal treatment there may be, yet it is idle to expect the mother-nation to attempt to enforce such right of ours except by persuasion. That this method will be most willingly made use of whenever necessary in future, may be taken for granted having regard to the settlement arrived at in South Africa at last. The recent utterances of His Excellency the Viceroy as to the advisability of the introduction of 'Reciprocity' in the matter of emigration constitute a further ground of hope of a reasonably favourable settlement of this subject. And in

responding to the kind call for opinion which His Excellency has been pleased to make, it is our imperative duty to strengthen his hands to the utmost of our power so as to enable him to secure a solution honourable to us in the matter. Turning to the difficulties arising in this country itself in manifold ways from the prejudice in question, it must be admitted that the outlook has hitherto been gloomy owing to the want of adequate knowledge on the part of the British public about the subject and to the obstacles in the way of our removing such ignorance. Luckily however the invincible proofs of India's whole-hearted and instinctive devotion, suddenly brought to light by the outbreak of the war, have wrought a most remarkable change not only in the minds of the whole of the people in the United Kingdom, but throughout the world. That change has been most conspicuous in the case of the "Thunderer" which dropping its customary forebodings about the consequences of unrest has even condescended to discuss the question of what India's reward is to be for its unexpected fidelity.

It is to be hoped that this spirit of generous appreciation now will continue to be a permanent factor after the cessation of the war, and conduce to the meeting out of full justice to this part of the Empire, in spite of and notwithstanding the complexion, with which nature in its infinite wisdom has thought fit to endow us. Our great responsibility in this connection is of course to take the most scrupulous care that this prejudice against us does not make us swerve even for a moment from the straight path of duty to our august Sovereign and His benign rule. We know His love is deep, His sympathy intense, and His concern for our welfare abiding. May we so conduct ourselves as to deserve and ensure that that Love, Sympathy and Concern shall continue unabated and full. May the Mighty Empire, which of Her own free-will took us within Her embrace, fail not in Her duty to us. And may Her noble motto "Righteousness exalteth a Nation" never change !

In concluding and offering you once more a most hearty welcome, I say, in the name of those unseen powers who watch

over and guide the Destinies of our Motherland, may your labours prove fruitful !

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In this session 25 resolutions were passed. Resolution I condoled the death of the wife and of the eldest son of the Viceroy (Lord Hardinge). Resolution II condoled the death of Ganga Prasad Verma. Resolution III condoled the death of Amberlal Sakarlal Desai and B.P. Chatterji. Resolution IV expressed profound devotion and unswerving allegiance to the British Crown during the times of world war in response to the Royal Message. Resolution V noted with gratitude and satisfaction the despatch of the Indian Expeditionary Force to the theatre of war and assured full support for the cause of the Empire. Resolution VI repeated the demand of the Congress for the Indianisation of the military services. Resolution VII demanded modification of the Arms Act. Resolution VIII appreciated the idea of emigration of the Indians abroad on the basis of reciprocity. Resolution IX urged the Government of India to promote the organisation and development of Indian industries. Resolution X desired removal of all invidious distinctions between His Majesty's Indian and other subjects by redeeming the pledges of Provincial Autonomy contained in the Despatch of 25 August, 1911 and by taking such measures as may be necessary for the recognition of India as a component part of the Federated Empire.

Resolution XI was related to the reforms of the Indian Councils. It said :

“Resolved that the Congress records its opinion that the Council of the Secretary of State for India should be abolished and pending its abolition makes the following suggestions for the amendment of its constitution :

- (a) That the salary of the Secretary of State for India should be placed on the English estimates.
- (b) That, with a view to the efficiency and independence of the Council, it is expedient that it should be partly nominated and partly elected.

- (c) That the total number of members of the Council should be not more than nine.
- (d) That the elected portion of the Council should consist of not less than one-third of the total number of members, who should be non-official Indians, chosen by a constituency consisting of the elected members of the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils.
- (e) That the election of Indians to the Council should be direct, and not of a panel of elected members as proposed in Lord Crown's Bill.
- (f) That not less than one-half of the nominated members of the Council should consist of public men unconnected with the Indian Administration.
- (g) That the remaining portion of the nominated members of the Council should consist of officials who have served in India for not less than ten years and have not been away from India for more than two years.
- (h) That no distinction whatever with regards to salary or allowance should be made between the Indian members and their colleagues in the Council.
- (i) That the character of the Council should be purely advisory as heretofore and that no change in the methods and procedure should be made which may convert or tend to convert it in any manner whatsoever into an administrative body.

This Congress regrets the summary rejection of the Council of India Bill of 1914."

Resolution XII repeated the demand of the Congress for honouring and safeguarding the interests of the Indian settlers in South Africa. Resolution XIII reiterated ban on the indentured labour. Resolution XIV repeated the demand of the Congress for separation of executive and judicial functions. Resolution XV reiterated the support of the Congress for swadeshi movement. Resolution XVI demanded repeal of the restrictions imposed by the Press Act. Resolution XVII demanded implementation of permanent land settlement

laws for the good of the agricultural population. Resolution XIX placed on record the deep sense of gratification and pride at the heroic conduct of the Indian troops in the Great War. Resolution XX appreciated the services of the Viceroy during war times and prayed for the extension of his tenure. Resolution XXI said about two amendments in the Constitution of the Indian National Congress.\* Resolution XXII thankfully appreciated the services of Sir William Wedderburn and other members of the British Committee for the cause of India. Resolution XXIII said about the reappointment of Nawab Syed Mohammed and N. Subba Rao Pantulu as the General-Secretaries of the Congress for the next year. Resolution XXIV acknowledged with deep gratitude the services rendered at great personal sacrifice by the Deputation which went to England last summer on behalf of the Congress to place before the Secretary of State for India the views of the Congress on the Indian Council Bill of 1914 and other important matters. Finally, Resolution XXV said about the holding of next session at Bombay.

## APPENDIX I

### CONSTITUTION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS ORGANISATION

*(As adopted in 1908 and amended in 1911)*

#### *Article 1*

#### Objects

The objects of the Indian National Congress are the attainment by the people of India of a system of government similar

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\*These amendments were : 1. At the end of Art. XX of the Constitution, add these words : 'If such a meeting be not called, it shall be called for the election of the delegates, within one month of the Congress in any town or district on the requisition of not less than 20 householders over 21 years of age to the Provincial or District Congress Committee in which the town of the requisition is situated.' 2. In Art. XX these alterations be made : (a) at the end of cl. 4 delete the word 'and', (b) at the end of cl. 5 put a comma in place of a full stop, (c) and add these words : 'and public meetings convened under the auspices of any association which has, as one of its objects, the attainment of Self-Government by India on Colonial Lines within the British Empire by constitutional means.'

to that enjoyed by the self-governing Members of the British Empire and a participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those Members. These Objects are to be achieved by constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit and developing and organising the intellectual, moral, economic and industrial resources of the country.

**Article II**

Every Delegate to the Indian National Congress shall express in writing his acceptance of the Objects of the Congress as laid down in Article I of this Constitution and his willingness to abide by this Constitution and by the Rules of the Congress hereto appended.

**Article III                      Sessions of the Congress**

- (a) The Indian National Congress shall ordinarily meet once every year during Christmas holiday at such town as may have been decided upon at the previous session of the Congress.
- (b) If no such decision has been arrived at, the All-India Congress Committee shall decide the matter.
- (c) An extraordinary session of the Congress may be summoned by the All-India Congress Committee, either of its own motion or on the requisition of a majority of the Provincial Congress Committees, wherever and whenever it may deem it advisable to hold such session.
- (d) It shall be open to the All-India Congress Committee to change the venue of the Congress to some other town when such change is deemed by it to be necessary or desirable owing to serious or unforeseen difficulties or other contingencies of a like nature.



**Article IV**                      **Component Parts of the  
Organisation**

The Indian National Congress Organisation will consist of

- (a) The Indian National Congress ;
- (b) Provincial Congress Committees ;
- (c) District Congress Committees or Associations affiliated to the Provincial Congress Committees ;
- (d) Sub-divisional or Taluka Congress Committees affiliated to the District Congress Committees or Associations ;
- (e) Political Associations or Public Bodies affiliated by the Provincial Congress Committees ;
- (f) The All-India Congress Committee ;
- (g) The British Committee of the Congress ; and
- (h) Bodies formed or organised periodically by a Provincial Congress Committee, such as the Provincial District Conferences or the Reception Committee of the Congress or Conference for the year.

**Article V**

No person shall be eligible to be a member of any of the Provincial or District or other Congress Committees or Associations or Bodies mentioned in clauses (b), (c), (d) and (h) of Article IV unless he has attained the age of 21 and expressed in writing his acceptance of the Objects of the Congress as laid down in Article I of this Constitution and his willingness to abide by this Constitution and by the Rules of the Congress hereto appended.

**Article VI**                      **Provincial Congress Committees**

To act for the Province in Congress matters and for organising Provincial or District Conferences in such a manner as it may deem proper, there shall be a Provincial Congress Committee with its headquarters at the chief town of the Province in each of the following nine Provinces :

**I Madras ; II Bombay ; III United Bengal ; IV United Provinces ; V Punjab (including N.W. Frontier Province) ; VI Central Provinces ; VII Behar ; VIII Berar ; and IX Burma.**

**Article VII**

**Every Provincial Congress Committee to be formed will add to its number :**

- (a) Representatives elected in accordance with its terms of affiliation by every affiliated District Congress Committee or Association referred to in clause (c) of Article IV ;**
- (b) As many representatives of recognised Political Associations or Public Bodies referred to in clause (e) of Article IV as each Provincial Congress Committee may think fit to determine ;**
- (c) Such other persons in the Province as may have attended as many sessions of the Congress as Delegates as may be determined by each Provincial Congress Committee for its own Province ;**
- (d) All such Ex-Presidents of the Congress or Ex-Chairmen of Reception Committees of the Congress as ordinarily reside within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Congress Committee and may not have been enrolled as members of the said Committee in accordance with clause (b) of Article VI or by virtue of the provisions contained in any of the foregoing clauses of this Article ;**
- (e) The Joint Secretary or Secretaries of the Congress ordinarily residing within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Congress Committee, such Joint Secretary or Secretaries being added as *ex-officio* member or members of the said Committee.**

**Article VIII**

**Every member of the Provincial Congress Committee shall pay an annual subscription of not less than Rs. 5.**

**Article IX**            District or other Congress Committees or Associations

The Provincial Congress Committee shall have affiliated to itself a District Congress Committee or Association for each District, wherever possible, or for such other areas in the Province as it deems proper, subject to such conditions or terms of affiliation as it may deem expedient or necessary. It will be the duty of the District Congress Committee or Association to act for the District in Congress matters with the co-operation of any Sub-divisional or Taluka Congress Committees which may be organised and affiliated to it, subject in all cases to the general control and approval of the Provincial Congress Committee.

**Article X**

Every member of the District Congress Committee or Association shall either be a resident of the District or shall have a substantial interest in the District and shall pay an annual subscription of not less than one rupee.

**Article XI**

No District Congress Committee or Association or Public Body referred to in clauses (c) and (e) of Article IV shall be entitled to return representatives to the Provincial Congress Committee or Delegates to the Congress or to the Provincial Conference unless it contributes to the Provincial Congress Committee such annual subscription as may be determined by the latter.

**Article XII**

Each Provincial Congress Committee shall frame its own Rules not inconsistent with the Constitution and Rules of the Congress. No District or other Congress Committee or Association mentioned in Article IX shall frame any Rules inconsistent with those framed by the Provincial Congress Committee to which it is affiliated.

**Article XIII**        The All-India Congress Committee

The All-India Congress Committee shall, as far as possible, be constituted as hereinbelow laid down :

15 representatives of Madras ;		
15	„	„ Bombay ;
20	„	„ United Bengal ;
15	„	„ United Provinces ;
13	„	„ Punjab (including N.W. Frontier Provinces) ;
7	„	„ Central Provinces ;
5	„	„ Behar ;
5	„	„ Berar ; and
2	„	„ Burma

Provided, as far as possible, that 1/5th of the total number of representatives shall be Mohammedans.

All Ex-Presidents of Congress, residing or present in India, and the General Secretaries of the Congress, who shall also be *ex-officio* General Secretaries of the All-India Congress Committee, shall be *ex-officio* members in addition.

#### **Article XIV**

The representatives of each Province shall be elected by its Provincial Congress Committee at a meeting held, as far as possible, before the 30th of November for each year. Should any Provincial Congress Committee fail to elect its representatives, the said representatives shall be elected by the Delegates for that Province present at the ensuing Congress. In either case, the representatives of each Province shall be elected from among the members of its Provincial Congress Committee, and the election shall be made, as far as possible, with due regard to the provision in Article XIII.

#### **Article XV**

The names of the representatives so elected by the different Provinces shall be communicated to the General Secretaries. These together with the names of the *ex-officio* member shall be announced at the Congress.

#### **Article XVI**

The President of the Congress at which the All-India Congress Committee comes into existence shall, if he ordinarily resides in India, be *ex-officio* President of the All-India Congress

Committee. In his absence the members of the All-India Congress Committee may elect their own President.

*Article XVII*

(a) The All-India Congress Committee so constituted shall hold office from the date of its appointment at the Congress till the appointment of the New Committee.

(b) If any vacancy arises by death, resignation or otherwise, the remaining members of the Province in respect of which the vacancy has arisen shall be competent to fill it up for the remaining period.

*Article XVIII*

(a) It will be the duty of the All-India Congress Committee to take such steps as it may deem expedient and practicable to carry on the work and propaganda of the Congress and it shall have the power to deal with all such matters of great importance or urgency as may require to be disposed of in the name of and for the purposes of the Congress, in addition to matters specified in this Constitution as falling within its powers or functions.

(b) The decision of the All-India Congress Committee shall, in every case above referred to, be final and binding on the Congress and on the Reception Committee or the Provincial Congress Committee, as the case may be, that may be affected by it.

*Article XIX*

On the requisition in writing of not less than 20 of its members, the General Secretaries shall convene a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at the earliest possible time.

*Article XX*                      **Electorates and Delegates**

The right of electing Delegates to the Indian National Congress shall vest exclusively in (1) the British Committee of the Congress ; (2) Provincial or District or other Congress Committees or Associations formed or affiliated. Bodies of more than two years' standing as may be recognised in that behalf by the Provincial Congress Committee of the Province

to which the Political Association or Public Body belongs.  
(3) Political Associations of British Indians resident outside British India, of more than two years' standing recognised by the All-India Congress Committee.

*Article XXI*

All delegates to the Indian National Congress shall pay a fee of Rs. 20 each and shall be not less than 21 years of age at the date of election.

*Article XXII*      Reception Committee of  
the Congress

(a) The Provincial Congress Committee of the Province in which the Congress is to be held shall take steps to form a Reception Committee for the Congress. Everyone, who ordinarily resides in the Province, fulfils the conditions laid down in Article V of this Constitution and pays such contribution as may be determined by the Provincial Congress Committee shall be eligible as member of the Reception Committee.

(b) No one who is only a member of the Reception Committee but not a Delegate, shall be allowed to vote or take part in the debate at the Congress.

(c) The Reception Committee shall be bound to provide the necessary funds for meeting all the expenses of the Congress as also the cost of preparing, printing, publishing and distributing the Report of the Congress.

*Article XXIII*      Election of the President

(a) In the beginning of the month of June, the Reception Committee shall consult the several Provincial Congress Committees as to the names of eligible persons for the Presidentship of the year's Congress. The Provincial Congress Committees shall make their recommendations by the end of July ; and in the month of August the Reception Committee shall meet to consider the recommendations. If the person recommended by a majority of the Provincial Congress Committee is accepted by a majority of the members of the Reception Committee

present at a special meeting called for the purpose, that person shall be the President of the next Congress. If, however, the Reception Committee is unable to elect the President in the manner mentioned above or in the case of emergency by resignation, death or otherwise of the President elected in manner aforesaid the matter shall forthwith be referred by it to the All-India Congress Committee, whose decision shall be arrived at, as far as possible, before the end of September. In other case, the election shall be final.

Provided that in no case shall the person so elected President belong to the Province in which the Congress is to be held.

(b) There shall be no formal election of the President by or in the Congress, but merely the adoption (in accordance with the provisions in that behalf laid down in Rule 3 clause (b) of the "Rules" hereto appended) of a formal resolution requesting the President, already elected in the manner hereinabove laid down, to take the chair.

#### *Article XXIV*

#### Subjects Committee

The Subjects Committee to be appointed at each session of the Congress to settle its programme of business to be transacted shall, as far as possible, consist of :

Not more than 15 representatives of Madras ;			
„	15	„	„ Bombay ;
„	20	„	„ United Bengal ;
„	15	„	„ United Provinces ;
„	13	„	„ Punjab (including N.W.F. Province) ;
„	7	„	„ Central Provinces ;
„	5	„	„ Behar ;
„	5	„	„ Berar ;
„	2	„	„ Burma ;
„	5	„	„ British Committee of the Congress ;
And additional	10	„	„ the province in which the Congress is held ;

—All the above-mentioned representatives being elected, in accordance with Rule 9 of the "Rules" hereto appended, by the Delegates attending the Congress from the respective Provinces.

The President of the Congress for the year, the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the year, all Ex-Presidents and Ex-Chairmen of Reception Committees, the General Secretaries of the Congress, the local Secretaries of the Congress for the year, not exceeding six in number, and all the members of the All-India Congress Committee for the year shall in addition be *ex-officio* members of the Subjects Committee.

*Article XXV*

The President of the Congress for the year shall be *ex-officio* Chairman of the Subjects Committee.

*Article XXVI*      Contentious Subjects and Interests of  
Minorities

(a) No subject shall be passed for discussion by the Subjects Committee or allowed to be discussed at any Congress by the President thereof, to the introduction of which the Hindu or Mohammedan Delegates, as a body, object by a majority of 3/4ths of their number ; and if, after the discussion of any subject, which has been admitted for discussion, it shall appear that the Hindu or Mohammedan Delegates, as a body, are, by a majority of 3/4ths of their number, opposed to the resolution which it is proposed to pass thereon, such resolution shall be dropped ; Provided that in both these cases the 3/4ths mentioned above shall not be less than a 4th of the total number of Delegates assembled at the Congress.

(b) The President of the Congress for the year may nominate 5 Delegates to the Subjects Committee to represent minorities or to make up such deficiencies as he may think necessary.

(c) In any representations which the Congress may make or in any demands which it may put forward for the larger association of the people of India with the administration of the country, the interests of minorities shall be duly safeguarded.



**Article XXVII**      **Voting at the Congress**

Ordinarily, all questions shall be decided by a majority of votes as laid down in Rule 21 of the "Rules" hereto appended, but in cases falling under Article XXX of this Constitution or whenever a division is duly asked for in accordance with Rule 22 of the "Rules" hereto appended, the voting at the Congress shall be by Provinces only. In cases falling under clause (1) of Article XXX, each Province shall have one vote, to be given as determined by a majority of its Delegates present at the Congress. In all other cases of voting by Provinces, the vote of each Province, determined as aforesaid, shall be equivalent to the number of representatives assigned to the Province in constituting the All-India Congress Committee.

**Article XXVIII**      **The British Committee of the Congress**

The Reception Committee of the Province, in which the Congress is held, shall remit to the British Committee of the Congress, through the General Secretaries of the Congress, half the amount of the fees received by it from Delegates.

**Article XXIX**      **General Secretaries**

(a) The Indian National Congress shall have two General Secretaries who shall be annually elected by the Congress. They shall be responsible for the preparation, publication and distribution of the Report of the Congress. They shall also be responsible for the preparation and circulation of Draft Resolutions of the Congress, which they must send to the Provincial Congress Committees at the latest in the first week of December.

(b) The All-India Congress Committee shall make such adequate provision for the expenses of the work devolving on the General Secretaries, either out of the surplus at the disposal of the Reception Committee or by calling upon the Provincial Congress Committees to make such contributions as it may deem fit to apportion among them.

**Article XXX**      **Changes in the Constitution or Rules**

No addition, alteration or amendment shall be made (1) in Article I of this Constitution except by a unanimous vote of

all the Provinces, and (2) in the rest of this Constitution or in the "Rules" hereto appended except by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the votes of the Provinces, provided, in either case, that no motion for any such addition, alteration or amendment shall be brought before the Congress unless it has been previously accepted by the Subjects Committee of the Congress for the year.

*Article XXXI*      **Transitory Provisions**

(a) The Committee appointed by the Convention at Suraton 28th December 1907 for drawing up a Constitution for the Congress shall exercise all the powers of the All-India Congress Committee till the formation of the latter at the next session of the Congress.

(b) The Secretaries of the said Convention Committee shall discharge the duties of the General Secretaries of the Congress till the dissolution of the next session of the Congress.

(c) The President and Secretaries of the Convention Committee should, in consultation with the Secretaries of the several Provincial Sub-Committees arrange for the holding of a meeting of the Congress during Christmas next in accordance with this Constitution.

(d) For the year 1908, the Reception Committee may, in electing the President consult the Provincial Congress Committees in the beginning of October, before the end of which month, the Provincial Congress Committees, on being so consulted, shall make their recommendations and the rest of the procedure prescribed in Article XXIII should be followed and completed, as far as possible, before the end of November.

(e) The Provincial Sub-Committees of the Convention shall in the first instance form themselves into Provincial Congress Committees.

(f) The Signatories of the Convention Committee shall take steps to form Separate Provincial Congress Committees for Central Provinces, Bihar and Burma.

(g) The Provincial Sub-Committees of the Convention shall, in the first instance, form themselves into Provincial Congress Committees.

(h) The Secretaries of the Convention Committee shall take steps to form separate Provincial Congress Committees for Central Provinces, Bihar and Burma.

## APPENDIX II

### RULES FOR THE CONDUCT AND REGULATION OF THE MEETINGS

*(As adopted in 1908 and amended in 1911)*

1. The Indian National Congress shall ordinarily hold an annual session at such place as may have been decided upon in accordance with Article III of the "Constitution" and on such days during Christmas week as may be fixed by the Reception Committee. An extraordinary session of the Congress shall be held at such town and on such days as the All-India Congress Committee may determine.

2. Each Congress session shall open with a meeting of the Delegates at such time and place as may be notified by the Reception Committee. The time and place of subsequent sittings of the session shall be fixed and announced by the President of the Congress.

3. The proceedings on the opening day at the first sitting of each Congress session shall, as far as possible, consist of :

(a) The Chairman of the Reception Committee's inaugural address of welcome to the Delegates.

(b) The adoption of a formal resolution, to be moved, seconded and supported by such Delegates as the Chairman of the Reception Committee invites or permits, requesting the President elected by the Reception Committee or the All-India Congress Committee, as the case may be, to take the chair, no opposition by way of a motion for amendment, adjournment or otherwise

being allowed to postpone or prevent the carrying out of the said resolution.

(c) The President's taking the Chair and his inaugural address.

(d) Reading or distribution of the Report, if any, of the All-India Congress Committee and any statement that the General Secretaries may have to make.

(e) Any formal motions of thanks, congratulations, condolence etc., as the President of the Congress may choose to move from the chair.

(f) The adjournment of the Congress for the appointment of the Subjects Committee and the announcement by the President of the time and place of the meetings of the Delegates of the different provinces for the election of the members of the Subjects Committee and also of the first meeting of the Subjects Committee.

4. No other business or motions in any form shall be allowed at the opening sitting of the Congress session.

5. The Chairman of the Reception Committee shall preside over the assembly at the first sitting until the President takes the chair. The President of the Congress shall preside at all sittings of the Congress session as well as at all meetings of the Subjects Committee. In case of his absence and during such absence, any Ex-President of the Congress present, who may be nominated by the President, and in case no Ex-President is available, the Chairman of the Reception Committee shall preside at the Congress sitting ; provided that the Subjects Committee may in such cases choose its own Chairman.

6. The President or the Chairman shall have, at all votings, one vote in his individual capacity and also a casting vote in case of equality of votes.

7. The President or Chairman shall decide all points of order and procedure summarily and his decision shall be final and binding.

8. The President or Chairman shall have the power, in cases of grave disorder or for any other legitimate reason, to adjourn the Congress either to a definite time or *sine die*.

9. The election of the member of the Subjects Committee shall take place at meetings of the Delegates of the different provinces held at such place and time as may be announced by the President. Each such meeting, in case of contest, shall have a Chairman who will first receive nominations, each nomination being made by at least 5 Delegates and then after announcing all the nominations he may ask each to give in a list of Delegates the members he votes for, or he may put the nominated names to the vote in such order as he pleases, or if there are only two rival lists, he shall take votes on these lists and announce the result of the election and forthwith communicate the same to the General Secretaries of the Congress.

10. The Subjects Committee shall deliberate upon and prepare the agenda paper for the business to be transacted at the next Congress sitting. The General Secretaries shall, as far as practicable, distribute among the Delegates a printed copy of the agenda paper of each sitting before the sitting commences.

11. At each sitting of the Congress, the order in which business shall be transacted shall be as follows :

- (a) The Resolutions recommended for adoption by the Subjects Committee.
- (b) Any substantive motion not included in (a) but which does not fall under Article XXX of the "Constitution" and which, 25 Delegates request the President in writing, before the commencement of the day's sitting, to be allowed to place before the Congress, provided, however, that no such motion shall be allowed unless it

has been previously discussed at a meeting of the Subjects Committee and has received the support of at least a third of the members then present.

12. Nothing in the foregoing rule shall prevent the President from changing the order of the Resolutions mentioned in Rule 11 (a) or from himself moving from the chair formal motions of thanks, congratulations, condolences or the like.

13. The proposers, seconders and supporters of the Resolutions recommended for adoption by the Subjects Committee shall be Delegates and shall be selected by the said Committee. The President may allow other Delegates to speak on the Resolutions at his discretion and may allow any distinguished visitor to address the Congress. Nothing in the foregoing, however, shall prevent the President from moving from the chair such Resolutions as he may be authorised to do by the Subjects Committee.

14. An amendment may be moved to any motion provided that the same is relevant to the question at issue, that it does not raise a question already decided or anticipate any question embraced in a resolution on the agenda paper for the day and that it is couched in proper language and is not antagonistic to the fundamental principles of the Congress. Every amendment must be in the form of a proposition complete in itself.

15. When amendments are moved to a motion, they shall be put to the vote in the reverse order in which they have been moved.

16. A motion for an adjournment of the debate on a proposition may be made at any time and so also, with the consent of the President or Chairman, a motion for an adjournment of the House. The President or Chairman shall have the power to decline to put to vote any motion for adjournment if he considers it to be vexatious or obstructive or an abuse of the rules and regulations.

17. All motions, substantive or by way of amendment, adjournment etc., shall have to be seconded, failing which they shall fall. No motions, whether those coming under Rule 11 (b) or for amendment, adjournment, closure, etc. shall be allowed to be moved unless timely intimation thereof is sent to the President with the motion clearly stated in writing over the signatures of the proposer and seconder with the name of the Province from which they have been elected as Delegates.

18. No one who has taken part in the debate in Congress on a resolution shall be allowed to move or second a motion for adjournment or amendment in the course of the debate on that resolution. If a motion for adjournment of the debate on any proposition is carried, the debate on the said proposition shall then cease and may be resumed only after the business on the agenda paper for the day is finished. A motion for adjournment of the House shall state definitely the time when the House is to resume business.

19. A motion for a closure of the debate on a proposition may be moved at any time after the lapse of half an hour from the time the proposition was moved. And if such motion for closure is carried, all discussion upon the original proposition or amendments proposed to it shall at once stop and the President shall proceed to take votes.

20. No motion for a closure of the debate shall be moved whilst a speaker is duly in possession of the House.

21. All questions shall be decided by a majority of votes, subject, however, to the provisions of Articles XXVII and XXX of the "Constitution." Votes shall ordinarily be taken by a show of hands or by the Delegates for or against standing up in their place in turn to have the numbers counted.

22. In cases not falling under Article XXX of the "Constitution," any twenty members of a Congress sitting may demand a division within 5 minutes of the declaration of the result of the voting by the President and such division shall be granted. Thereupon the Delegates of each Province shall

meet at such time and place as the President may direct and the Chairman of each such meeting shall notify to the President the vote of the Province within the time specified by the President.

23. Every member of a sitting of the Congress or of the Subjects Committee shall be bound (a) to occupy a seat in the block allotted to his Province, save as provided for in rule 30, (b) to maintain silence when the President rises to speak or when another member is in possession of the House, (c) to refrain from hisses or interruptions of any kind or indulgence in improper and un-Parliamentary language, (d) to obey the Chair, (e) to withdraw when his own conduct is under debate after he has heard the charge and been heard thereon, and (f) generally to conduct himself with propriety and decorum.

24. No member shall have the right at a Congress sitting to speak more than once on any motion except for a personal explanation or for raising a point of order. But the mover of a substantive motion (not one for amendment or adjournment) shall have the right of reply. A person who has taken part in a debate may speak upon an amendment or motion for adjournment moved after he had spoken. The President or Chairman shall have the right to fix a time-limit upon all speakers, as also to call to order or stop any speaker from further continuing his speech even before the time-limit expires, if he is guilty of tedious repetitions, improper expressions, irrelevant remarks, etc., and persists in them in spite of the warning from the President.

25. If a person does not obey the President's or the Chairman's orders or if he is guilty of disorderly conduct, the President shall have the right, with a warning in the first instance, and without a warning in case of contumacious disregard of his authority, to ask such member to leave the precincts of the House, and on such requisition the member so ordered shall be bound to withdraw and shall be suspended from his functions as a member during the day's sitting.

26. If the President considers that the punishment he can inflict according to the foregoing section is not sufficient, he



may, in addition to it, ask the House to award such punishment as the House deems proper. The Congress shall have the power in such cases of expelling the member from the entire Congress session.

27. The Reception Committee shall organise a body of such persons as it may deem fit for the purpose of keeping order during the meeting of the Congress or of its Subjects Committee or at divisions. There shall be a Captain at the head of this body and he shall carry out the orders of the President or the Chairman.

28. Visitors may be allowed at the sitting of the Congress on such terms and conditions as the Reception Committee determines. They may at any time be asked to withdraw by the President. They shall be liable to be summarily ejected from the House if they enter the area marked out for the Delegates, or if they disobey the Chair, or if they are guilty of disturbance or obstruction, or if they are in anywise disorderly in their behaviour.

29. The meetings of the Subjects Committee shall be open only to the members of that Committee and the meetings of the Delegates of each Province at divisions shall be open to the Delegates of that Province only, subject in either case to the provisions of Rule 27.

30. The Chairman of the Reception Committee and the President as well as the Secretaries may, at their discretion, accommodate on the Presidential platform (1) Leading members of the Congress, (2) Distinguished visitors, (3) Members of the Reception Committee, (4) Ladies, whether Delegates or visitors, and (5) Members of the All-India Congress Committee.

31. The foregoing Rules shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Provincial or District Conferences organised by the Provincial Congress Committee as provided for in Article VI of the "Constitution."

## **PART II**

# **BRITISH COLONIAL INTERPRETATIONS AND PRONOUNCEMENTS**

**There is a certain section in India which looks forward to a measure of self-government approaching that which has been granted in the Dominions. I see no future for India on these lines. The experiment of extending a measure of self-government practically free from parliamentary control to a race which is not our own, even though that race enjoys the services of the best men belonging to our race, is one which cannot be tried. It is my duty as Secretary of State to repudiate the idea that the despatch implies anything of the kind as the hope or goal of the policy of Government. At the same time, I think it is the duty of the nation, and of the government for the time being of the nation, to encourage in every possible way the desire of the inhabitants of India to take a further share in the management of their country.**

**—Lord Crewe,  
Secretary of State for India,  
24 June, 1912.**

## ON INDIAN EDUCATION\*

I was very much gratified when I learnt that it was the desire of the Directors of Public Instruction, who are assembled in Conference at Simla, that I should attend one of their meetings to say a few words. The desire was conveyed to me by Mr. Orange, in language so flattering that I could not resist it ; for he said that he spoke for all the Directors and that they spoke for the whole Service, of which they are members. Accordingly, I accepted the invitation and that is why I am here to-day. I feel rather like a General addressing his Marshals for the last time, before he unbuckles his sword and retires into private life, for the task which has engaged so much of our energies during the past seven years has been like nothing so much as a campaign marked by a long series of engagements, which we have fought together, and though I am about to resign my commission, you will remain to carry on, I hope, the same colours to victory on many another well-won field. To you, therefore, I need make no apology for offering a few final remarks on your own subject. It would almost be an impertinence if I were to address you on any other. In a well-known work of fiction, one of the characters is made to groan over that bore of all bores, whose subject had no beginning, middle or end, namely, education. Here, however, where we all belong to the same category, I must accept the risk of inflicting that form of penance on others in the hopeful assurance that I shall not be found guilty by you.

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\*Speech of Viceroy Lord Curzon at a conference of the Directors of Public Instruction held at Simla on 20 September, 1905.

Gentlemen, when I came to India, educational reform loomed before me as one of those subjects which, from such knowledge of India as I possessed, appeared to deserve a prominent place in any programme of administrative reconstruction. I thought so for several reasons. In the first place, vital as is education everywhere as the instrument by which men and nations rise, yet, in a country like India, in its present state of development, it is perhaps the most clamant necessity of all ; for here education is required not primarily as the instrument of culture or the source of learning, but as the key to employment, the condition of all national advance and prosperity and the sole stepping stone for every class of the community of higher things.

It is a social and political, even more than an intellectual, demand and to it alone can we look to provide a livelihood for our citizens, to train up our public servants, to develop the economic and industrial resources of the country, to fit the people for the share in self-government which is given to them and which will increase with their deserts, and to fashion the national character on sound and healthy lines. The man in India who has grasped the education problem has got nearer to the heart of things than any of his comrades, and he who can offer to us the right educational prescription is the true physician of the State. There is another reason for which education in India is a peculiarly British responsibility, for it was our advent in the country that brought about that social and moral upheaval of which Western education is both the symbol and the outcome.

As regards religion, we sit as a Government in India "holding no form of creed but contemplating all." We have deliberately severed religion from politics and though we have our own Church or Churches, we refrain, as an act of public policy, from incorporating Church with State. But we do not, therefore, lay down that ethics are or should be divorced from the life of the nation ; or that society, because it does not rest upon dogmatic theology, should lose the

moral basis without which in all ages it must sooner or later fall to pieces, for education is nothing unless it is a moral force. There is morality in secular text-books as well as in sacred texts, in the histories and sayings of great men, the example of teachers, in the contact between teachers and pupils, in the discipline of the class-room, in the emulation of school life.

These are the substitutes in our Indian Educational system for the oracles of prophets or the teaching of divines. To them we look to make India and its people better and purer. If we thought that our education were not raising the moral level, we should none of us bestir ourselves so greatly about it. It is because it is the first and most powerful instrument of moral elevation in India that it must for ever remain a primary care of the State. The State may delegate a portion of the burden to private effort or to Missionary enterprise, but it cannot throw it altogether aside. So long as our Government is in India what it is, we must continue to control and to correlate educational work, to supply a large portion of the outlay, to create the requisite models and to set the tone.

As soon as I looked about me but little investigation was required to show, in the words of a familiar quotation, that there was "something rotten in the state of Denmark." For years education in India had been muddling along with no one to look after it at headquarters, or to observe its symptoms, till the men who had given up their lives to it were sick at heart and well-nigh in despair. It was not that splendid and self-sacrificing exertions were not being devoted to the task ; it was not that any class, European or Indian, was indifferent to its claims, for I believe that in India there is a genuine passion for education among all classes. It was not that there had been deliberate or conscious neglect. but there was a deplorable lack of co-ordination, there was a vagueness as to fundamental principles ; slackness had crept in, standards had depreciated, and what was wanting was the impulse and movement of a new life. It was for these reasons that I threw my-

self with burning zeal into the subject of educational reform, I knew the risks that had to be run. There was not one among them that could be apprehended that has not been incurred. I was aware of all the taunts that would be levelled, that we should be accused, when we were merely raising a debased standard, of wanting to shut the doors of education in the face of the people ; and, when we felt it our duty to assert the proper control of Government, of desiring to aggrandise the power of the State and many other equally unfounded charges. But the object seemed to me to be worth the risk. The allies and fellow-workers were there, who were only too ready and anxious to join in the struggle, and it merely remained to formulate the plan of action and to go ahead.

For the first two years, we surveyed the ground and reconnoitred the position of the opposing forces and then we began. I look to the meetings of the Simla Conference in the month of September, 1901, just four years ago, as the first act in the real campaign. The Conference has often been denounced by those who knew not the real nature of its labours as a sort of Star Chamber conclave that was engaged in some dark and sinister conspiracy. Some of you were present at its meetings and you know how much of truth there was in that particular charge, I do not hesitate to say that a Conference more independent in its character, more sincere in its aims, or more practical and far reaching in its results never met at the headquarters of the Indian Government. The Meeting was a body of experts, non-official as well as official, convened in order to save Government from making mistakes and to assure me that we were advancing upon right lines. Our programme was laid down in the published speech with which I opened the proceedings. We covered the whole field of educational activity in our researches and we laid down the clear and definite principles, which, so far from being concealed, were published at full length later on in the Education Resolution of March, 1904, and which for years to come will guide the policy of the State. Then followed the appointment of a Director-General of Education, most fully justified by the devoted labours, the informed enthusiasm and

the unfailing tact of Mr. Orange. Next in order came the Universities Commission, presided over by my former colleague, Sir Thomas Raleigh, in 1902. Then followed the Universities Legislation of 1903-4, of which, looking back calmly upon it, I say that I do not regret the battle or the storm, since I am firmly convinced that out of them has been born a new life for Higher Education in India. Finally, came the comprehensive Resolution of which I have spoken. Since then, the policy of reform laid down by the Simla Conference has been carried into execution in every branch of educational effort, until at last the Directors of Public Instruction from every Province have been sitting here for a week in conference to compare notes as to what has already been accomplished and to discuss fresh plans for the future.

These are the main landmarks of the great enterprise upon which we have all been employed for so long, and a moment has arrived when it is not impossible, to some extent, to reckon up the results. What was the state of affairs that we had to redress? I will try to summarise it. As regards primary or elementary education of the children of the masses in the vernaculars, the figures which appeared in the Resolution were sufficiently significant. Four out of every five Indian villages were found to be without a school; three out of every four Indian boys grow up without any education, only one Indian girl in every forty attends any kind of school. These figures are of course less appalling in a continent of the size, the vast population, the national characteristics and the present state of advancement of India than they would be in any western country. But they are important as illustrating, if not the inadequacy of the past efforts, at any rate, the immensity of the field that remains to be conquered. We found primary education suffering from divergence of views as to its elementary functions and courses, and languishing nearly everywhere for want of funds. In secondary education, we found schools receiving the privilege of recognition upon most inadequate and untrained and incompetent teachers, imparting a course of instruction devoid of life to pupils subjected to a pressure of



examinations, that encroached upon their out-of-school hours, and was already beginning to sap the brain power as well as the physical strength of the rising generation. Inferior teaching in secondary schools, further, has this deleterious effect, that it re-acts upon college work and affects the whole course of University instruction, of which it is the basis and the starting point. We found these schools in many cases accommodated in wretched buildings and possessing no provision for the boarding of the pupils. As regards vernaculars, which must for long be the sole instrument for the diffusion of knowledge among all except a small minority of the Indian people, we found them in danger of being neglected and degraded in the pursuit of English—and in many cases very had English—for the sake of its mercantile value. By all means let English be taught to those who are qualified to learn it, but let it rest upon a solid foundation of the indigenous language, for no people will ever use another tongue with advantage that cannot first use its own with ease. But in higher education the position was still worse, for here it was not a question so much of a blank sheet in the education of the community as of a page scribbled over with all sorts of writing, some of it well formed and good, but much of it distorted and wrong. We found in some of the affiliated colleges a low standard of teaching and a lower one of learning, ill-paid and insufficient teachers, pupils crowded together in insanitary buildings, the cutting down of fees in the interests of an evil commercial competition and management on unsound principles. Finally, coming to the Universities, we found courses of study and a system of tests which were lowering the quality while steadily increasing the volume of the human output, students driven like sheep from lecture room to lecture room and examination to examination, text-books badly chosen, degrees pursued for their commercial value, the Senates with over-swollen numbers selected on almost every principle but that of educational fitness, the Syndicates devoid of statutory powers—a huge system of active but often misdirected effort, over which, like some evil phantom, seemed to hover the monstrous and maleficent spirit of cram. Of course, there were better and re-assuring features in the

picture, and there were parts of the country where the merits greatly exceeded the defects, but we had to correct the worst even more than to stimulate the best, and like a doctor it was our duty to diagnose the unsound parts of the body rather than to busy ourselves with the sound. Moreover, there were some faults that were equally patent everywhere. It is recorded of the Emperor Aurungzeb, after he had seized the throne of the Moghal Empire, that he publicly abused his old tutor for not having prepared him properly for these great responsibilities. "Thus", he said, "did you waste the precious hours of my youth in the dry, unprofitable and never ending task of learning words." That is exactly the fault that we found with every phase of Indian Education as we examined it everywhere. It was words that were being studied, not ideas, the grain was being spilled and squandered while the husks were being devoured. I remember a passage in the writings of Herbert Spencer, in which he says that to prepare us for complete living is the true function of education. That is a conception which is perhaps as yet beyond the reach of the majority of those whom we are trying to educate in this country, but in the rut into which it had sunk, I doubt if European Education in India, as we were conducting it, could be described as a preparation for living at all, except in the purely materialistic sense, where, unhappily, it was too true. But of real living, the life of the intellect, the character, the soul, I fear that the glimpses that were obtainable were rare and dim. Of course, all these tendencies could not be corrected straight away. It would be a futile and arrogant boast to say that we have reformed Indian Education. There is equal scope for educational reformers now, to-morrow, next day and always. Education is never reformed, it may advance or remain stationary, or recede; it may also advance on right lines or on wrong lines. Our claim is merely to have rescued it from the wrong track and given it a fresh start on the right one. If we have set up a few milestones on the path of true progress we shall have done something for it and perhaps made further advance for our successors.

What I think we may claim to have effected has been the following. In primary education, we have realised that improve-

ment means money. We have laid down that primary education must be a leading charge on Provincial revenues and in order to supply the requisite impetus, we gave in our last Budget a very large permanent annual grant of Rs. 35 lakhs to be devoted to that purpose alone. This will be the real starting point of an advance that ought never to be allowed henceforward to slacken. Most of the money will go in buildings to begin with and a good deal in maintenance afterwards. Thousands of new Primary schools are already opening their doors under these auspices and in a few years' time the results should be very noteworthy. In building we lay stress upon the provision of suitable and airy school houses in place of the dark rooms or squalid sheds in which the children had previously been taught. Training schools for teachers are similarly springing up or being multiplied in every direction. We have defined the nature of the object lessons that ought to be taught to the children in Primary schools and the courses of study and the books that are required for the instruction of the cultivating classes. We have everywhere raised the pay of primary teachers where this was inadequate and are teaching them that their duty is to train the faculties of their pupils and not to compel them to the listless repetition of phrases in which the poor children find no meaning. I look, as the result of this policy, to see a great development in elementary education in the near future. It is apt to be neglected in India in favour of the louder calls and the more showy results of higher education. Both are equally necessary, but in the structure of Indian Society one is the foundation and the other the coping stone and we who are responsible must be careful not to forget the needs of the voiceless masses, while we provide for the interests of the more highly favoured minority who are better able to protect themselves. In secondary education the faults were largely the same and the remedies must be the same also. More teachers are the first desideratum, more competent teachers the second, more Inspectors the third. The increase that we have everywhere effected in the inspecting staff is remarkable. Next comes reform in courses of study and buildings. All these necessities are summed up in the duty which we have undertaken of laying

down sound tests for official recognition. From this we pass on to the development of the commercial and industrial sides of these schools, as against the purely literary, since there are thousands of boys in them who must look to their education to provide them with a practical livelihood rather than to lead to a degree and above all to the reduction of examinations. That is the keynote everywhere. Have your tests, sift out the good from the bad, furnished the incentive of healthy competition, but remember that the Indian boy is a human being with a mind to be nurtured and a soul to be kept alive, and do not treat him as a mechanical drudge or as a performing animal, which has to go at stated intervals through the unnatural task to which its trainer has laboriously taught it to conform.

I hope that the Government of India will not be indifferent to the claims of secondary education in the future. When the Universities and the Colleges have been put straight we must look to the feeders, and these feeders are the High Schools. Indeed, we cannot expect to have good colleges without good schools. I am not sure, if a vote were taken among the intelligent middle classes of this country, that they would not sooner see money devoted to secondary education than to any other educational object. The reason is that it is the basis of all industrial or professional occupation in India. There is just a danger that between the resonant calls of higher education, and the pathetic small voice of elementary education, the claims of secondary education may be overlooked, and I therefore venture to give it this parting testimonial.

When we come to higher education our policy, though based on identical principles, assumes a wider scope and has, I hope, already effected one even more drastic change. It is very difficult to carry out substantial reforms in higher education in India, because of the suspicion that we encounter among the educated classes that we really desire to restrict their opportunities and in some way or other to keep them down. There is, of course, no ground whatever for suspicion. Not only does it run counter to the entire trend of British

character and to all the teaching of British history, but it would be a short-sighted and stupid policy, even if it were adopted, for education to whatever extent it may be directed or controlled is essentially an organic and not an artificial process and no people, particularly a highly intelligent and ambitious people like the educated classes in India, could possibly be confined, so to speak, in a particular educational compartment or chamber because the Government was foolish enough to try and turn the key upon them. What has been in our minds, though it has not always been easy to explain it to others, has been firstly, the conviction that those who were getting higher education were getting the wrong sort of it, because they were merely training the memory at the expense of all the other faculties of the mind and that it could not be good for a nation that its intellect should be driven into these lifeless grooves, and, secondly, the belief that reform was to be sought by making educationalists more responsible for education in every department, giving them power on Senates and Syndicates, improving the quality of the teaching staff and providing for the expert inspection of colleges and schools. Let me put it in a sentence. Higher education ought not to be run either by politicians or by amateurs. It is a science—the science of human life and conduct—in which we must give a fair hearing and a reasonable chance to the Professor. If our reforms are looked at in this light, it will be seen that they are based upon a uniform and logical principle. We swept away the old overgrown Senates or bodies of fellows and re-constituted them on the lines which should make educational interests predominate in the government of the Universities. Similarly, we placed experts in the majority on the executive committees or Syndicates. It is these bodies, who will draw up the new courses, prescribe the text books and frame the future standards of education. Of course, they may go wrong and the Government retains the indispensable power of putting them right if they do so ; but the initial and principal responsibility is theirs and if they cannot make a better thing of higher education in India, then no one can. Similarly, we carry the expert into the mofussil. If we are to improve the

affiliated institutions we must first prescribe, as we have done, sound and definite conditions of affiliation ; and then we must send round sympathetic inspecting officers to detect local shortcomings, to offer advice and to see that the new conditions are observed. Simultaneously, if sustained efforts are made, as we are making them, to improve the quality of the teachers and give them opportunities, when on furlough, of studying other systems, and if at the other end of the scale we provide for proper entertainment of the boys in well managed hostels or boarding houses, then it seems to me that we have created both the constitutional and the academic machinery by which reform can be pursued and that if it be not accomplished it must be for some reason which we have failed to discern. Anyhow, I can see nothing in the objects of the processes that I have described to which the most sensitive or critical of Indian intelligence need object and the most hopeful guarantee of success is to be found, in my view, in the fact that the best and most experienced Indian authorities are entirely on our side. Personally, therefore, I regard our University legislation and the reform that will spring from it as a decree of emancipation. It is the setting free for the service of education, by placing them in authoritative control over education, of the best intellects and agencies that can be enlisted in the task ; and it is the casting off and throwing away of the miserable gyves and manacles that had been fastened upon the limbs of the youth of India, stunting their growth, crippling their faculties and tying them down. In my view, we are entitled to the hearty co-operation of all patriotic Indians in the task, for it is their people that we are working for, and their future that we are trying to safeguard and enlarge. Already, I think that this is very widely recognised. The old cries have, to a large extent, died away and among the valedictory messages and tributes which I have received in such numbers from native sources during the past few weeks have been many which placed in the forefront the services which I am generously credited with having rendered to the cause of Indian education. One of the most gratifying features of this renaissance in the history of Indian education, as I hope it may in time

deserve to be called, has been the stimulus that has been given to private liberality showing that Indian Princes and noblemen are keenly alive to the needs of the people and one in cordial sympathy with the movement that we have striven to inaugurate. The Rajah of Nabha called upon the Sikh community to rouse themselves and put the Khalsa College at Amritsar on a proper footing for the education of their sons, and they responded with contributions of Rs. 20 lakhs. In Bengal, there have been handsome gifts for the proposed new College of Ranchi. The Aligarh Trustees continue to improve their magnificent College, and last year, I believe, achieved a record subscription list in their Conference at Lucknow. In the United Provinces, the enthusiasm of Sir J. LaTouche has kindled a corresponding zeal in others. The College at Bareilly is to be shifted from a corner of the High School buildings to a new building on a fine site given by the Nawab of Rampur. When I was at Lucknow in the spring, I saw the site of the new residential College in the Badshah Bagh, to which the Maharajah of Balrampur has given a donation of Rs. 3 lakhs. Government has not been behindhand in similar liberality and apart from the Rs. 25 lakhs which we promised and are giving to assist the Universities in the work of reconstruction, we have assisted the purchase of sites for University buildings in many places and are prepared to help in other ways. It is a truism in higher education as elsewhere that the first condition of progress is money and this is being provided both by the Government and by private effort in no stinted measure.

I might detain you, Gentlemen, much longer by discussing the various measures that we have taken with regard to other branches of education in India, for it is to be confessed that the aspirations which I set before myself and before the Simla Conference were not confined to the sphere of primary, secondary and higher education alone, but embraced the whole field of educational reform. There is no corner of it where we have not laboured and are not labouring. We have not, in our zeal for Indian education, forgotten the cause of European and Eurasian education in this country. We have

revised the Code ; we have made a most careful examination of the so-called Hill Schools and are re-establishing the best among them on an assured basis ; we are giving handsome grants-in-aid and scholarships ; we are appointing separate Inspectors for these institutions and are starting a special Training College for teachers.

Then there is a class of education which deserves and has attracted our particular attention, viz., that which is intended to qualify its recipients for the professional occupations of Indian life here. Our Agricultural College at Pusa which is intended to be the present of similar institutions in every other Province, each equipped with a skilled staff and adequate funds, has been specially devised to provide at the same time a thorough training in all branches of agricultural science and practical instruction in estate management and farm work. These institutions will, I hope, turn out a body of young men who will spread themselves throughout India, carrying into the management of states and estates, into private enterprise and into Government employ the trained faculties with which their College courses will have supplied them. Agriculture in India is the first and capital interest of this huge continent, and agriculture, like, every other money-earning interest, must rest upon education.

Neither have we forgotten female education, conscious that man is, to a large extent, what woman makes him and that an educated mother means educated children. Since the Simla Conference, Bengal has already doubled the number of girls under instruction, the female inspecting staff has been overhauled in most Provinces, and some ladies possessing high qualifications have been sent out from England. Good model girls schools and good training schools for the female teachers are a desideratum everywhere. It will take a long time to make substantial progress, but the forward movement has begun.

There remains the subject of technical education, which has occupied an immense amount of our attention both at



the Simla Conference and ever since. We have had Commissions and Reports and enquiries. We have addressed the local Governments and studied their replies but we are only slowly evolving the principles under which technical instruction can be advantageously pursued in a country where the social and industrial conditions are what they are. In India, whether we look at the upper or at the lower end of the scale, this difficulty is equally apparent. People wonder why Mr. Tata's Institute of Science comes so slowly into being and in a country where it is the custom to attribute anything that goes wrong to the Government, all sorts of charges have been brought against us of apathy or indifference or obstruction. No one would more readily acknowledge than Mr. Tata himself that so far from discouragement or opposition he has met with nothing at the hands of the Government but sympathy and support ; but Mr. Tata wisely wants not merely to start the magnificent conception of his father, but to make it practical and to ensure its success : and I can assure you that the rival views that prevail as to the best method of accommodating this great idea to the necessities of India are extraordinary. We have experienced similar difficulties in our own smaller undertakings. As is generally known, we have instituted a number of Technical scholarships of £ 150 each for Indian students in Europe and America, but, strange as it may seem, it has not invariably been easy at first to find the candidates qualified to fill them. However, we now have a number of Indian scholars from Bengal who are studying mining at Birmingham and our latest step was to grant three scholarships for textile industries in Bombay. Other attempts will follow, and in a short time there will, in my view, be no lack either of candidates or subjects. Similarly with industrial schools, which we have been anxious to start on a large scale for the practical encouragement of local industries. There is the widest diversity of opinion as to the principles and the type, for it must be remembered that although India is a country with strong traditions of industrial skill and excellence, with clever

artisans and with an extant machinery of trade guilds and apprentices, these are constituted upon a caste basis, which does not readily admit of expansion, while the industries themselves are, as a rule, localised and small, rendering co-ordination difficult. We are, however, about to make an experiment on a large scale in Bombay and Bengal; and I have every hope that upon the labours and researches of the past few years posterity will be able to build.

Upon these and many other subjects, I might discourse to you at length; but you are better acquainted with them than I am and I have addressed myself to-day not so much to the details as to the principles that have underlain the great movement of educational activity upon which we have together been engaged. To you and to your successors I must now commit the task. It is a work which may well engage your best faculties and be the proud ambition of a lifetime. On the stage where you are employed, there is infinite scope for administrative energy and, what is better, for personal influence; while in the background of all your labours stands the eternal mystery of the East with its calm and immutable traditions, but its eager and passionate eyes. What the future of Indian Education may be neither you nor I can tell. It is the future of the Indian race, in itself the most hazardous, though absorbing, of speculations. As I dream of what education in India is to be or become, I recall the Poet's lines :—

“Where lies the land to which the ship would go,  
Far, far away is all her seamen know;  
And while the land she travels from away.  
Far, far behind is all that they can say.”

In the little space of navigable water for which we are responsible, between the mysterious past and the still more mysterious future, our duty has been to revise a chart that was obsolete and dangerous, to lay a new course for the vessel and to set her helm upon the right track.

## ENGLAND AND INDIA'S POLITICAL RECONSTRUCTION\*

It should be a source of unfeigned satisfaction to persons interested in India when closer attention is given in England to Indian affairs. The closer attention exercises a valuable influence our own moral sense is awakened by increased knowledge; more adequate knowledge of actual facts is accompanied by a livelier consciousness of deficiency and of increased responsibility. On the other hand, our Indian fellow-subjects are clear gainers from the stimulus which their rulers receive from the beneficial action of public opinion in Europe.

I am not disposed to overrate the value of such influence, and I am free to admit that the most active manifestations of English opinion have often been actuated by race animosity. But even in such cases English opinion is able to exercise a beneficial influence in comparison with Anglo-Indian opinion in India. It finds utterance in more temperate and decorous language. No vulgar abase of Indians,<sup>1</sup> such as sometimes

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\*From Sir Henry John Stedman Cotton : *New India or India in Transition*, pp. 160-202.

1. In order that my readers may be able to form some idea of the language which Anglo-Indian journals have not been ashamed to use, I give below an extract from a newspaper which appeared at a time when the Ilbert Bill agitation may be supposed to have died out :—

“Baboo Lal Mohun Ghosh has decided to accept the invitation of the Deptford 400 to become the Liberal candidate for the representation of their new borough. It is not too much to say that this rabid, worthless mob of four hundred is more fit for the inside of a lunatic asylum.

sweeps over India, would be tolerated in any newspapers or public meetings in this country. Distance from the scene enables men to judge of events with less excitement and irritability. There is greater moderation, and the growth of opinion advances on irresistible lines in increasing sympathy with the Indian people and an increased sense of England's responsibility for India's welfare. Every year there is an addition to the number of authorities who avow doctrines which were formerly condemned as unpatriotic and unreasonable, and who in their appeal to a higher tribunal than national self-love are gradually leavening the tone of public opinion by their persistent enthusiasm, and profoundly modifying existing conceptions.

Some of the best books about India have been written by men who have had no official concern with the country, who have perhaps never even visited it, and who derive all their knowledge of it from indirect sources. Such books will often contain more valuable reflections on the nature of our administration of India, on the constitution of our Empire, on the effects of our rule, and on the dangers (external and internal) which may befall it, and they offer also more valuable suggestions in regard to the future of India, than are usually to be

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than for catering for the political well-being of our native land. If a Bengalee Baboo can enter Parliament, it will soon become a favourite resort for Aryans. In an insensate, idiotic thirst for novelty, where will an English mob stop? Could a chimpanzee be trained to stand for a borough, doubtless he would be found to have an excellent chance with a county constituency. And perhaps a chimpanzee would be a cleverer animal than this Ghosh Baboo, whose publicly uttered sentiments in Dacca obtained for him the distinguishing title of polecat. Thank Heaven! four hundred do not represent an English constituency, and the Baboo may find to his cost that at the last moment the English nationality has revived. In such a case his insolence and presumption in seeking a seat in Parliament would be fitly rewarded by an infuriate crowd of roughs!"

The accomplished Indian gentleman to whom the above remarks refer was President of the Indian National Congress held at Madras in 1903.

found in similar books put forth by Indian officials of the widest experience. There is an advantage in being untrammelled by official antecedents. The opinions of those who have passed long years of service in India are unconsciously weighed down and narrowed by a bias derived from their whole life and environment. Many admirable books about India have, indeed, been written by Anglo-Indians, officials and non-officials ; but the tendency of officials is to exalt unduly the excellence of the work on which they have been themselves engaged, and err on the side of excessive self-laudation. It results from this unfortunate but natural tendency, that it is necessary to make a wide allowance for the optimistic character of most Anglo-Indian writers ; and the higher the official rank of the authority, the more sure is he to be an apologist, or perhaps biographer, of his own administration, and the more needful it is to discount his conclusions. The exceptions of such men as Lobb, Osborn, and Geddes, who died before they could accomplish their work, or of many living officers who, in their retirement, devote their unflagging energies to the true interests of India, do not affect the general truth of my statement. The fact remains that it is not in the volumes annually published by Anglo-Indian administrators that we may look for any glimmer of insight into that utter derangement of economic and social conditions which our conquest has wrought, and which is the chief cause of the pauperisation of the people. Nor is it likely that in these volumes we shall find any perception of the deteriorating effect wrought upon both conquerors and conquered by the anomalous relations existing between them. These are elements of cardinal importance in considering whether, on the whole, our presence in India has been for good or for evil ; and yet their very existence is commonly ignored in the writings of official apologists. The pessimist writers who have the courage and ability to express their opinions, discharge, therefore, a useful function which will continue to be necessary so long as officials like Mr. Justice Stephen and Sir John Strachey continue to maintain that our Indian Government is the most beneficent, most perfect, and most unalterable that can be imagined. Unfor-

tunately their work is for the most part critical only ; it may wither and destroy, but does not replace. The real need of India is reconstruction ; and it is the special value of such utterances as those of Osborn, Caird, and Blunt—and particularly of Dr. Congreve's pamphlet on India, and the treatise on India in the "English Citizen" series,<sup>2</sup> both written by gentlemen who have no personal knowledge of India—that being composed without prejudice, and with an adequate appreciation of the facts of the case, they lead directly to the formation of administrative principles on which a reconstructive policy can be based.

I would mention the names of Messrs Hyndman and William Digby with respect, though I cannot agree with all their conclusions. Mr. Digby has rendered a valuable service by drawing the attention of the British public to India's poverty. Sir James Caird's book is full of useful and practical suggestions. *Ideas about India*, which were reprinted by Mr. Wilfred Scawen Blunt from the *Fortnightly Review*, are conspicuous illustrations of keen insight into the real relations between England and India. The outburst of indignation they excited among Anglo-Indians is an instructive contrast to the impression they created among the Indian community, which was briefly one of mingled surprise and gratification that an Englishman who had only travelled in India for a few months should be able so thoroughly to understand and represent their feelings. Our obligations are due to the late Sir William Hunter, whose unquenchable optimism impairs but does not destroy the value of his vivid interpretations of India to the English reader. Mr. Romesh Dutt, with great erudition and exemplary industry, has devoted himself to the elucidation of elaborate studies on the economic and historic aspects of Indian life. Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir William Wedderburn, the late Messrs Fawcett and Bradlaugh, and the late Mr. Caine, whose premature death all India mourns, have devoted

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2. *Colonies and Dependencies*, Part I., "India," by J.S. Cotton (Macmillan, 1883).

their great influence, both in and out of Parliament, to the interests of India in this country. I may cite greater names who have wrought still more in the formation of public opinion in England on India. Edmund Burke will always be pre-eminent for his profound sympathy with the people of India and for the extraordinary knowledge of the country he acquired. The eloquence of his utterances has made them household words among us, and ensures their influence for all time. The writings and speeches of Macaulay have rendered inestimable service by popularising and establishing on a broad basis the application of liberal principles in practical administration and policy. The noblest and most eloquent of modern statesmen also, Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright have stirred the heart of Englishmen, and deservedly earned the gratitude of the people of India by recalling England to a sense of her duties to her great dependency.

The essential importance of English opinion in regard to India will be best appreciated if we measure what the effect of such opinion has been in regard to Irish reform. Internal agitation in Ireland has always been useless ; it was only when Irish agitation was supplemented by a powerful phalanx of opinion in England that any concessions were allowed to the sister island. And so it is in the case of India. There is, I am persuaded, no reason to justify the fears of those who look on the peaceful solution of the Indian problem as a mere speculative contingency altogether outside the sphere of practical politics. But we know that internal pressure is powerless ; it leads to repression only, the ultimate outcome of which must be a national outbreak. The experiment of a "firm and resolute government" in Ireland has been tried in vain, and the adoption of a similar policy in India is inevitably destined to fail. The remedy for both countries is the same. The opportunity of a peaceful solution rests in both cases with the English people, who alone have it in their hands to effect a material modification in the attitude of Government through the pressure of public opinion from the mother country.

The powerlessness of any action which may originate in India itself is illustrated by the history of Lord Ripon's administration. It is impossible that I can mention Lord Ripon's name in terms of too high praise. From the moment he landed in India to the day he left it he laboured for the native population. His tenure of office will always be a memorable one. He will be known in history as the author of a progressive and enlightened policy as a statesman of wide and sincere sympathy with the people of the country, above all others "the Friend of India", and it will be the proudest honour of his successors if their names are handed down to posterity with that of Ripon. Yet he was able to accomplish little. It is true that the political revolution now taking place in India is largely attributable to his exertions—although by the irony of fate it is far more largely attributable to the blind fanaticism of those who opposed him—but the actual results of his administration as shown upon the statute-book are not very great. I recognise the difficulties by which he was surrounded, and it may be that he was encompassed by other difficulties, of which I have no knowledge. He was harassed and hampered in an inconceivable degree by the bigotry and race feeling of his own fellow-countrymen. He was paralysed from want of support, and neither he nor any man in his position single-handed could have overcome the dead wall of opposition by which he was confronted.

I take this opportunity (before I allude further to Lord Ripon's policy) of linking the present with the past, and of invoking for his predecessors and successors their due tribute of acknowledgement. I do this advisedly, for I am able to bear testimony to the good which has been done; and I think there is too great a tendency among those who are impressed with the injustice of the English conquest to look with jaundiced eyes on all features of Indian administration. We may condemn the conquest (as animated by unworthy motives, for which no adequate justification has ever been brought forward), but we need not blind ourselves to the advantages which have followed from it. If it has been the case that,



almost without exception, every Governor-General has extended the area of British territory, it is also the case that every Governor-General has taken his part in consolidating a peaceful administration over the territory so acquired. If the external policy of Government has been one of systematic aggression, it is also true that the internal policy has been one of continual progress. To Lord Cornwallis we owe the foundation of the present form of the civil administration, the purification of the Civil Service, and the priceless boon of a permanent land settlement in Bengal. To Lord William Bentinck we owe the establishment of the principle that no natives of India are to be excluded by reason of their birth from any appointments under Government.<sup>3</sup> We owe to Lord William Bentinck, under the inspiration of Macaulay, the foundation of an educational system which has revolutionised India. To Lord Dalhousie we owe the initiation of a policy for developing the resources of the country which is now bearing fruit. The memory of Lord Canning will always be cherished by the Indian people for his justice, his firmness and courage at the time of a great crisis, and for his clemency. To Sir John

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3. As long ago as 1833 it was provided by an Act of Parliament "that no native of the said territories, nor any natural-born subject of her Majesty resident therein, shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office, or employment under the said Company." The same assurance was conveyed by the Queen's proclamation of 1858, when the Government of India was transferred from the Company to the Crown. And so it was observed by Lord Northbrook in the House of Lords, "Whether it was Lord Dalhousie with his imperial instincts, or Lord Canning with the responsibility laid upon him of dealing with the Mutiny, or Lord Lawrence with his great knowledge of the internal organisation of the country, or Lord Mayo, associated from childhood with the Conservative party,—all alike held that there should be no distinction of class or race, and that there should be one law for all classes of her Majesty's subjects."

Lawrence we owe the municipalisation of the large towns<sup>4</sup>; to Lord Mayo the decentralisation of the finances. To the humanity of Lord Northbrook we are indebted for the definite and practical assertion of the principle that it is the first duty of the administration during famine to preserve life. To Lords Dufferin and Lansdowne we owe the establishment of Legislative Councils upon a more or less popular basis. There is not one of the Governor-Generals of India whose name we may not associate with large and enlightened measures for the welfare, education, or political training of the people.

I venture, therefore, to think that the progress already made is a fit subject for commemoration. It is well to remember that a policy of consolidation has proceeded hand in hand with a career of conquest, that the establishment of order is always essential to any real progress, and that the united and continuous efforts of previous generations are the necessary introduction to all great measures of reform. If the war epoch has at last drawn to a close, if the conquest of India is complete, and our future proconsuls may sigh with Alexander that they have no more worlds to conquer, if all the energies of the Indian Government may now be devoted to the encouragement of national reconstruction—the vantage position we thus occupy is entirely due to the labours of our predecessors. It is they who have prepared the way for the

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4. The following utterance of Sir John Lawrence, on 31st August 1864, distinctly foreshadows our present policy :—"Great public benefit is to be expected from the firm establishment of a system of municipal administration in India. Neither the central Government nor the local governments are capable of providing either the funds or the executive agency for making the improvements of various kinds in all the cities and towns of India which are demanded by the rapidly developing wealth of the country. The people of India are quite capable of administering their own affairs; the municipal feeling is deeply rooted in them. The village communities, each of which is a little republic, are the most abiding of Indian institutions. Holding the position we do in India, every view of duty and policy should induce us to leave as much as possible of the business of the country to be done by the people."

pending changes which are about to affect every portion of the Empire. It is well to acknowledge that great progress has been already made in imparting, civilisation, education, and order, and that the mechanism of one of the most remarkable movements ever known in the world has been set going by the hand of Government.

The policy of Lord Ripon was thus described by an acute but hostile critic in the House of Lords : "It is the policy of gradually transferring political power in India from European to native hands."<sup>5</sup> "Does it not mean," asked Lord Lytton,<sup>6</sup> "nay, ought it not to be taken as meaning, that we, the English Government in India, feel ourselves in a false position, from which we wish to extricate ourselves as quickly as possible ? We must no doubt hold office for a certain time, in order to train up you natives to take our places ; but this is our only object. As soon as it is accomplished (and the sooner the better), we shall retire, and leave India to be governed by whatever body her native representative assemblies may see fit to entrust with the task of government." This is Lord Lytton's language, not mine ; it is a paraphrase uttered by a politician who had himself been Viceroy, with a full sense of responsibility and knowledge that his words were not likely to be forgotten. They are, indeed, but the echo of a sentiment which has made itself widely felt among the Anglo-Indian community in India. The organisation in Calcutta of a European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association, which comprises among its members nearly all the unofficial magnates in Bengal, which is largely supported by the active sympathy of officials, and which, according to the *Englishman* newspaper, "inaugurates a new era in the history of British India," is a phenomenon only to be understood in the light of Lord Lytton's gloss on Lord Ripon's policy. It is true that Lord Ripon himself was careful to abstain from any such outspoken avowal, and that his friends and supporters were but too ready to offer the excuse that the proposals which excited so

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5. As reported in the *Times*, 10th April 1883.

much bitter and violent opposition were really isolated in character and individually of small importance. It is true that the language of Lord Lytton was at once deprecated by Her Majesty's Ministers in that half-hearted manner in which the Liberal Government is too apt to protest against conclusions which must ensue from the conscientious application of its professed principles. It would therefore be incorrect to say that either the Liberal Ministry at home or Lord Ripon in India had consciously identified themselves with the policy which Lord Lytton enunciated on their behalf. On the contrary, it is probable that Lord Ripon was, in the first instance, as unconscious of the inevitable tendency of his own measures as he was admittedly unprepared for the tremendous opposition their introduction provoked. At the same time it would be unjust to deny to Lord Ripon the most ample credit for a great work. He was the instrument at whose hands a long and elaborate preparation at last received its due fulfilment. But he was a great deal more than a mere instrument. The policy which he espoused is indeed the logical development of principles which all previous Viceroys—even Lord Lytton himself—had been ripening to maturity. But it was Lord Ripon who took action far more decided than any of his predecessors, who by his own personal enthusiasm infused life into the dry bones of the dull office machine, and by the vigour of his example stimulated the subordinate governments to give practical expression to his views. Already the benevolent despotism of an autocratic administration is merging into a system of free representation and municipal and local independence. The way is being gradually prepared for the emancipation of the Indian people. There has been no change in the power of Government, which is still as supreme as that of the Czar of Russia. The Government of India is still characterised by its absolutely despotic constitution. But it is in the spirit and disposition with which supreme power is now exercised that a change is visible. We have seen the complete reversal of an aggressive policy on the North-West Frontier. After having been for nearly fifty years under British rule, the province of Mysore was lately restored to its here-

ditary prince, and for the first time in the history of India the red line of British possessions has receded. The Guicowar of Baroda was restored to his dominions. In spite of unprecedented provocation, the little State of Manipore was not annexed. A system of provincial representation has been introduced into the local legislatures. A comprehensive scheme of local self-government has been organised. An Indian judge has been appointed more than once to officiate as Chief Justice of the High Court. The "enforcement of civilisation irrespectively of the wishes or feelings of the people" under which legislation and taxes have been augmented until the imposition of a new fiscal duty becomes a question rather of policy than of finance ; the "establishment of a scientific frontier" absorbing for military purposes all the proceeds of additional taxation which had been expressly levied as an insurance against future famine ; the "inherent overwhelming turpitude of native character," that Anglo-Indian dogma so freely and unwarrantably postulated by subordinate officials and *litterateurs*—these are phrases which I am glad to think are discredited and past. At least they are no longer avowed as the basis of our Indian policy. We may observe among exceptional members of the official hierarchy manifestations of a wise and liberal attitude and of a wider grasp of the meaning of political events. The admirable independence and courage which were displayed by men like the late Sir Henry Harrison and Mr. Geddes inspire us with a confidence that others situated in their position may be emboldened to follow in their footsteps. Even among the highest authorities of Government there are those who are alive to changes unrecognised by most of those habituated to residence in the country.

The period of Lord Ripon and his immediate successors has been well described as the Golden Age of Indian reformers, when the aspirations of the people were encouraged, education and local self-government were fostered, and the foundations of Indian nationality were firmly laid. The natural trend of Anglo-Indian opinion has been to assert itself in a reactionary

outburst against this development, disparaging the vantage-ground acquired in the past. In the Imperialism of Lord Curzon these reactionary tendencies have found a too willing mouthpiece. We are told that the weakness and limitations of the newly educated classes are now more clearly perceived, and that the complexities of the problems of Oriental politics are more distinctly realised. But it is not by indulgence in such vague generalities that the current of advance can be stemmed. Temporary spasms of reaction are inevitable. They pass away like footprints on the sand, and we need not trouble ourselves too much with these vexatious aberrations from the path of progress. They will be quickly forgotten. In the meantime the old principles of administration, although they are discredited, cannot be formally destroyed until they are replaced ; and for the Government to accomplish this is no easy task. It is not every Viceroy in India who is able to resist the pressure brought to bear on him by his own countrymen. It requires the assurance of a strong moral support from home, support not from the English Government only, but from the English people. It is a common complaint that the politics of India find no echo in the life and interests of Englishmen. Nothing short of a great famine or a great Durbar, a victory or a defeat, will attract attention to our vast dependency. The complaint is just, and it is perhaps inevitable that it should be so. But the spirit of indifferentism is hardly less dangerous than the spirit of the new Imperialism. England is a great nation with vast responsibilities, unique and unparalleled in their wide-reaching influence and operation. It is our privilege, the privilege of her people, to assist and determine action and to formulate policy. I do not deny the English opinion may be profitably exercised on particular subjects, but it is of even greater importance that it should be directed to moulding general principles. I remember the words of Mr. Gladstone when he spoke in the House of Commons<sup>6</sup> of the relations between Parliament and the Indian Government. He said : "It is not our business to advise what machinery the Indian

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6. Debate on the Indian Councils Bill, June 1892.

Government should use. It is our business to give to those representing Her Majesty's Government in India ample information as to what we believe to be sound principles of government. It is also the duty and function of this House to comment upon any case in which we think the authorities in India have failed to give due effect to those principles but in the discharge of their high administrative functions, or as to the choice of means, there is no doubt that that should be left in their hands." These words were wise. It is not by attempting to rule directly a country like India that we can do our duty to that distant territory. The details of administration must be left in the hands of those who possess a competent knowledge of Indian affairs, upon whom must always rest the personal responsibility of giving effect to a reconstructive policy without disturbance. For them there is good and noble work remaining to be done. The difficulties accompanying the present epoch of excitement can only be successfully overcome by the cordial co-operation of Indian officials during the crisis. By the exercise of personal influence which is virtue of their position is almost indescribably great, by the force of a strong example of tolerance, courtesy, and good will, they have it in their power to do much to temper prestige and pride, and to establish a more kindly relationship with the people. For us, our duties lie in a different direction. Busied with the ordinary affairs of life, it is not possible for us to familiarise ourselves with the details of Indian administration. Our interests are nearer home. But our responsibilities remain. The white man's burden is on us. A policy of indifferentism is one of the greatest calamities that could befall India. Our duty is to make ourselves acquainted far more nearly than we do at present with the current events and history of India—so much, indeed, is easy—but, above all, on the basis of such acquaintance to form convictions on the general policy which should guide the Government, and to labour in the creation of a popular opinion which shall share those convictions and stimulate and strengthen the authorities in putting them into practice.

Those, at least, who think as I do need not hesitate to offer such aid as they can give, have no cause for hesitation. We are already armed for the encounter, and, inspired by the belief we profess, have no difficulty in forming the principles which we think should be followed. We accept the fundamental doctrine of modern social life, the subordination of politics to morals. We claim to test our politics action by moral considerations, allowing that for the State as well as for individuals it is the question not of rights but of duties that must take precedence. These are the new principles we have to offer in substitution of the worn-out ideas which have provisionally been employed. This, therefore, is our policy of reconstruction. The policy of the future—which is based alike on the duty of England and on the need of India, on the devotion which is due from a strong nation to a weak and subject people—must be a policy of national self-sacrifice, voluntary restitution, and disinterested moderation.

There are, I suppose, not many reflecting persons who will maintain that our occupation of India, as we hold it, can be of a permanent character. The emancipation of India has become inevitable ever since a system of English education was established and the principle of political equality accepted. The great upheaval which has revolutionised all departments of Indian thought, inspired the aspirations of diverse communities, and infused the sense of nationality throughout a vast and surging empire can only find its peaceful fulfilment in the wise and prescient recognition of changes imminent in the situation which the British Government itself has created. The Right Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone wrote as long ago as 1850 :—

“I conceive that the administration of all the departments of a great country by a small number of foreign visitors, in a state of isolation produced by a difference a religion, ideas, and manners, which cuts them off from all intimate communion with our people, can never be contemplated as a permanent state of things. I conceive also that the progress of



education among the natives renders such a scheme impracticable, even if it were otherwise free from objection. It might, perhaps, have once been possible to have retained the natives in a subordinate condition (at the expense of national justice and honour) by studiously repressing their spirit and discouraging their progress in knowledge; but we are now doing our best to raise them in all mental qualities to a level with ourselves, and to instil into them the liberal opinions in government and policy which have long prevailed in this country, and it is vain to endeavour to rule them on principles only suited to a slavish and ignorant population."

These words are a lasting tribute to the sagacity of the old Anglo-Indian statesman who had lived for thirty years in India, who had ruled as Governor of Bombay for eight years, to whom the Governor-Generalship of India was twice offered, and who in honoured requirement in the evening of his life had lost none of his sympathetic interest in the country he had served so well. The experience of more than half a century since they were written merely confirms their truth.

India is indeed a tutelage unexampled in history, and we have incurred liabilities on its account not lightly to be set aside. England should not more break from its past than should India break from traditions of its history. An abrupt retreat would, as has been well said, be to act like a man who should kidnap a child, and then in a fit of repentance abandon him in a tiger jungle. The deplorable opposition which was kindled in India against Lord Ripon's measures is evidence of the difficult and delicate character of the work which lies before us. I do not say that the process of reconstruction can be effected otherwise than by slow and gradual means. Many years must elapse, generations may pass away, before we can expect the consummation of the policy I advocate. But it is a policy which we should always keep before our eyes, and to which all our efforts should give coverage. Sooner or later India must again take her own rank among the nations of the East, and our action should be devoted to

facilitating her progress to freedom. Not in mere vague talk, but strenuously and of set purpose, it should be the principal object of our Indian Government to address itself to the peaceful reconstruction of native administration in its own place.

The task is not so stupendous as at first appears. The difficulty is not so much to organise internal administration as to provide for the existence of healthy relations between separate and independent states. But even in this respect the difficulties are exaggerated. It would ill become Englishmen, who are actually engaged in a daily policy of dangerous repression, to confess themselves incapable of political reconstruction.

The best solution of the problem is apparently to be found in the proposal to place India on a fraternal footing with the colonies of England. A constitutional relationship of this kind, as though England were the parent country and India its colony, would form a material guarantee for the peaceful attitude of the Native States. England will always have a stake in India sufficient to call forth interference if necessary, and in the event of a civil war in India the military interposition of England would be required in the interest of both countries. England herself, therefore, will continue to afford the principal guarantee of place.

Autonomy and not assimilation is the keynote of England's true relations with her great colonies. It is the keynote also of India's destiny. The circumstances of Russia afford no parallel. In itself historically and geographically more of an Oriental than a Western power, Russia has without much effort or deliberate policy absorbed the border tribes on its eastern frontier, and all its extensions eastward have been coterminous with its own natural and ever-widening boundaries. In this way it has by a sure and almost unconscious process assimilated vast areas of Northern and Central Asia up to the confines of the Pacific. Assimilation has been complete, but

there is no autonomy, for Russia has none to give. The relations of England with India are in striking contrast to those of Russia with Central Asia. We have not simply overstepped our borders, and our contact with the East is not the incorporation of neighbouring states. There can be no assimilation between Englishmen and the natives of India, separated from us by many thousand miles of land and sea. But in accordance with an august and liberal policy we have extended to India the inestimable boons of education, political equality ; and representation. The dawn of the day has risen which Macaulay declared<sup>7</sup> in the House of Commons would be the proudest day in England's history. The full development of autonomy is still in a distant future, but the beginnings have been laid and the paths have been made straight. The claim for representation in the Government of Great Britain is frequently put forward in the advanced organs of Indian thought, and Indian candidates have often stood for Parliament. This

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7. The eloquent and prophetic utterance of Lord Macaulay in the House of Commons in 1833 ought always to be ringing in our ears :—

“The destinies of our Indian Empire are covered with thick darkness. It is difficult to form any conjecture as to the fate reserved for a state which resembles no other in history and which forms by itself a separate class of political phenomena. The laws regulate its growth and its decay are still unknown to us. It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown our system ; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government ; that having become instructed in European knowledge, they may in some future age demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in England's history. To have found a great people sunk in the lowest depths of slavery and superstition, to have so ruled them as to have made them desirous and capable of all the privileges of citizens, would indeed be a title to glory all our own. The sceptre may pass away from us. Unforeseen accidents may derange our most profound schemes of policy. Victory may be inconstant to our arms. But there are triumphs which are followed by no reverse. There is an empire exempt from all natural causes of decay. Those triumphs are the pacific triumphs of reason over barbarism ; that empire is the imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature, and our laws.”

need not excite our wonder when we consider how the glamour of a Parliamentary career dazzles men's eyes. But it would be more fitting and I am sure more gratifying to the ambition and energies of these able and cultivated Indians if they were afforded a larger and more appropriate outlet in the administration of their own country. A certain measure of representation has already been accorded to the Indian people in the local legislatures. It is in its further development, in the increase of their power and influence in India itself, and not in representation in England, that we shall find the appropriate and natural prize and legitimate goal for Indian aspiration.

In the face of the bloated armaments of Europe it may seem useless to speculate about the reduction of the English army in India. But with a proper reorganisation of the native army it should be possible to effect a material diminution in the number of English troops required. There are only two ways of governing a conquered country ; there is no safe standing-point between absolute suppression and absolute equality. The last is the goal to which we tend, and in military no less than civil reconstruction it is necessary to identify the interest of individuals with the State. The native army is, however, now organised on a mercenary basis. It is more and more replenished by rude and ignorant recruits from the borders of our frontier or beyond it, and the martial spirit of our own Indian subjects is gradually dying out. "Tribes," writes Sir Richard Temple, "which fifty years ago were notoriously attached to arms are now comparatively unwarlike. With training and discipline the troops will still behave very well ; but with the masses of them there is hardly now the predilection for the fight, the instinct of physical contention, that there used to be." The Mogul emperors adopted hardly and completely the policy of trust ; Akbar's greatest generals and most devoted adherents were children of the very men his grandfather had conquered ; the Rajput chivalry was the main bulwark of the Mogul throne. The British Government, on the contrary, has adopted a policy of suspicion ; the non-commissioned officers of our native army are only old soldiers,

promoted from the ranks, who in virtue of their longer services draw larger pay, and are permitted to sit down in the presence of an English subaltern. We can expect no assistance from such men, and we get none. The Russians can get from the territories they have absorbed in Central Asia an Alikhanoff or a Loris Melikoff. We can only produce men who rise to the rank of Naik, Havildar, or Resaldar, or to some other subordinate post, the name of which perplexes the English public. The first step towards the reorganisation of the native army is to augment the power of the native officers, to afford some scope to their abilities and ambition, and to raise them to a level with ourselves. Lord Curzon has already moved in this direction. His commendable object as to attract into our armies the gentlemen and aristocracy of the country. This in itself will afford a powerful impetus towards the conversion of the native mercenary army into a national force. A further step is required. The decentralisation (if it may so be called) of the native army is the logical complement of Lord Curzon's policy. The establishment of provincial army corps, with an *esprit* and traditions of their own, recruited from the common people, and officered by the native gentry of the provinces in which they are to serve, would prove both a safeguard against internal disorder and a protection against attack from without. Just as the Rajputs and Mussulmans under the Moguls formed separate armies with their national chiefs, and inspired by rivalry distinguished themselves by feats of valour which are still remembered; so the provincial armies of the future animated by a similar emulation, would display equal valour and hardihood in fighting for a common cause.

The native remedy—the permission to volunteer—is another proposal which tends in the same direction of the gradual disbandment of mercenaries and English soldiers. The agitation in favour of volunteering has been set on foot and is sustained entirely by educated natives of the country. It is primarily the outcome of an honourable feeling that as they ask for a larger share in the administration, and to be allowed

to exercise the privileges and rights of citizens, so they ought not to shrink from their national duties. But this feeling is also allied with others equally honourable. As the late Sir Henry Harrison, in the pamphlet I have already quoted, well says:<sup>8</sup>—

The desire to be enrolled as volunteers arises (1) from a wish for political equality, a desire not to be regarded as helots, while other sections of the community are regarded as Spartans ; (2) from a conviction that those who claim their share in the prizes of administration must show their willingness to bear their share of the burdens of the citizenship ; (3) from a knowledge that the Bengalees and other Indian races are physically degenerate, and a desire to do something, however little, to make them less effeminate ; (4) from a pride in association with a noble empire like that over which Her Majesty presides, and a desire to share in its glories by being numbered among its defenders ; (5) from a conviction that a struggle may be imminent in India between the forces of retrogression led by Russia and those of progress led by England and that their sympathies and their fortunes must unhesitatingly and unwaveringly be thrown in with the latter.

The enthusiasm which the educated natives evinced on this subject was very remarkable, and it was echoed by the native press with singular earnestness and unanimity. The Government repressed it with a cold refusal ; but if persistence will bear any proportion to the determination expressed, it is a movement calculated to exercise a considerable influence in modifying the future constitution of our armies, and in keeping alive the military spirit of the country.

In civil administration the need of a similar policy is more evident and has made more way. The tendency towards decentralisation, though momentarily discouraged, is firmly established, and is eventually destined to resolve itself into a federated union such as prevails in the Federation of Australia

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8. Ought Natives to be Welcomed as Volunteers ? p. 22.

and in the Canadian Dominion. Provincial representative government will gradually lead to the development and definition of the peculiar idiosyncrasy of each federated state. It is a noble and exalted duty that is reserved to our fellow-countrymen who are responsible for the destinies of India. It is theirs to guide and facilitate the transition. The ideal of political reconstruction is a federation of states under the supremacy of England, with provincial national armies gradually replacing the standing army of Great Britain. The careful conservation of existing social institutions is the essential supplement of this reconstruction. The country recoils from such a social revolution as our Western civilisation has thrust upon it. It still needs the hierarchial leadership of caste. The tendency to reduce the power of the dominant classes and to destroy, if possible, all distinction between the different strata of society is much in vogue among headstrong administrators, who are too apt to transplant the radical associations of our democracy into a country altogether unsuited to their growth. But there is no more patrician *milieu* in the world than that which has for centuries flourished in India and still is vigorous, in spite of attacks upon it. Lord Lytton, at the time of the "Kaisar-i-Hind Durbar" at Delhi, appointed a few of the principal chiefs in India to be Councillors of the Empire, but the sound instinct which marked his action has not been revived, and these "pillars of state" have never been invited to take their part in Imperial deliberations. Lord Curzon, who is endowed with no small measure of Oriental insight, might have been expected to appreciate the value of this association of the Government with the aristocracy of the Empire. But he has shown no sign. It is not, however, too late for him to attract to the nation's councils the great noblemen of India. This would be a great step in political reconstruction.

The sympathetic and systematic encouragement of the government of Native States is another natural link in the same direction. Some of these States—such as Mysore, Travancore, and Baroda—have shown that, in the hands of their enlightened chiefs, models of administration may be looked for under

indigenous rule. The names of Sir Dinker Rao, Sir Madhava Rao, and Sir Salar Jung—not to mention other ministers of equal ability, although perhaps of less fame—are sufficient evidence of the aptitude and skill with which the affairs of large and important independent territories have been administered. What is required, in the absence of an emasculating foreign army, is an organisation of small States, each with a prince at its head, and a small body of patrician aristocracy interposing between him and the lower order of working men. For such an arrangement the country appears to be eminently adapted ; the United States of India should be bound together by means of some political organisation other than the colonial supremacy of England. The basis of internal order is to be found in the recognition of a particiate accustomed by hereditary associations to control and lead.

Even the Mahomedan community is largely influenced by caste practices derived from its long contact with the Hindoo system. The Mahomedans as well as the Hindoos are thus well fitted for an aristocratic form of government. The difference between the Hindoo and Mahomedan religions would not at all stand in the way of the establishment of a similar form of government in both cases. The difference in religion is, however, one of the greatest practical difficulties in any scheme of reconstruction. I do not forget that the principal officers of state under the great Akbar were Hindoos ; that the chief officers under Hyder Ali were also Hindoos ; and that the ablest prime minister of Runjeet Singh, the man who kept his policy straight, was a Mahomedan. These instances give ground for hope that a principle of social unity between the chiefs and aristocracies of the Hindoo and Mahomedan classes may some day be established. At the same time it is impossible to be blind to the general character of the relations between Hindoos and Mahomedans ; to the jealousy which exists and manifests itself so frequently, even under British rule, in local outbursts of popular fanaticism ; to the inherent antipathy with which every devout follower of Islam cannot but regard the idolatrous worship of Kali and Krishna. There are good reasons, there-



fore, for saying, as has been said, that the leaders of either community would find it insupportable to live under the domination of the other. Certainly I, for one, do not think that any amalgamation is probable, or that it would be possible to find from either community a common head with equal sympathies for both. The leaders of the people have, indeed, to a considerable extent already agreed to a separation, and in many parts of India the Mahomedan aristocracies are so distributed geographically that they will be able to avoid a collision with their Hindoo rivals. It appears desirable that the British Government should extend a helping hand to assist this natural tendency. The lower orders, fortunately, will remain unaffected by such a separation, and to the bulk of the people the difficulties of assimilation do not apply. The delta of Bengal, for instance, is peopled for the most part by quiet and inoffensive races, whether Mussulman or Hindoo between whom, from long association, a close affinity exists. The followers of Islam, who constitute an undoubted majority of the population, differ little in language, customs, or occupation from the older inhabitants of the country. In this division of the country the difficulty does not present itself; but in other parts of India it will generally be found that the Mahomedans are still, as they were under their own dynasty, the principal members of the community, and that they have established among themselves a religious and fanatical exclusiveness from the infidels with whom it is their lot to live. With these men and with the leaders of the Hindoo community, who are divided from them by unsympathising, not to say hostile, relations, the difficulties of assimilation are very great, and it is only in the distant future that we can venture to predict a time when fundamental differences shall subside under the impulse of a common faith and purpose.

The future of the European settlers and of the Eurasian community demands a similar but somewhat easier solution. The tendency of Eurasians to imitate the attitude of Europeans in regard to Indians is a source of growing disturbance, inas-

much as their claims to social supremacy cannot be admitted by the more strictly called native community. These claims arise only from blood and language relations with British-born subjects, who, however, on their part hold the Eurasians at a distance in consequence of their relationship with the natives. Excluded on both sides, their condition is extremely anomalous and if England were to abandon India it is probable that as a class they would sink to the level of the Mahomedan proletariat. But if England does not break off from India, as we know she will not, it seems that the welfare of the Eurasians as well as of Europeans can be best secured by the formation of separate little settlements at suitable localities, resembling the free cities of Germany or the city republics of Venice and Genoa. Such cities would then contain the European and Eurasian community who may choose to reside in the country. This is a state of things which is now, in fact, actually growing up. All the important civil and military stations in India comprise what is called a European quarter, and the municipal administration of such places is a source of endless misunderstanding between the native and Anglo-Indian populations. Complete separation, both by geographical limits and political institutions, is apparently the only means of putting an end to irritation which in times of political trouble may easily become a source of serious danger. Their protection, if protection were necessary, will be afforded by the prestige and power of England. But it is not necessary. It has been acutely suggested by one of my Indian friends—a friend to whom I am indebted for other suggestions on this subject—that the alarm so often raised by Anglo-Indians on the ground of hostility from the natives means nothing more than a consciousness of their own hostile inclinations towards the natives. Indians may be irrational and uncompromisingly exclusive, but they are not aggressive. And the alarms of the Anglo-Indians, seemingly so innocent and so entirely on the defensive, are designed only to rouse the sympathies of Englishmen at home, so that they may send forth succour which the Anglo-Indians know very well will serve them also for purposes of aggression. Even if all military support from England were withdrawn, the withdrawal

would not be injurious to Anglo-Indians, who, when conveniently located in separate places and with separate political constitutions, would be constrained in their own self-interest to adopt a more conciliatory demeanour towards the people of the country.

Turning now to the question of foreign invasion, on which I must say a few words, I think most persons will be found to agree that there need be no apprehension of such invasion from Asiatic Powers ; if there be, it may be presumed that the various states and free cities would be strong enough to resist any attack. But it will be alleged that the real fear of foreign invasion is from European Powers, and probably from Russia. There are persons to whom Russia is a constant dread, a kind of demon of infinite capacity, possessed by a malignant and unceasing desire to wrest India from our hands. It is a curious phenomenon, this prejudice against Russia ; but it is a prejudice, in my opinion, as baseless as it is hard to explain. The Russophobist labours under a strange hallucination. I, for my part, believe with Mr. Bright "that Russia has no more idea of crossing the frontier of India into the Indian Empire than we have of crossing the frontier of India and invading the Asiatic possessions of Russia." With Lord Salisbury I would advise the victims of a baseless scare to buy large-sized maps, and learn how insuperable are the obstacles which Nature has placed between the land of the Czar and the Indian dominions of the British Crown. With Lord Beaconsfield "I think that from the period of the conquest of Tashkend, some ten years ago,<sup>9</sup> every one must have felt that it was almost inevitable that all of these khanates would be conquered by Russia. Some gentlemen think that this advance of Russia ought to be nipped in the bud. But nipping it in the bud means that the English Power should have proceeded beyond our Indian boundary, and should have entered on a most hazardous and, I should say, most unwise struggle. I am not of that sort which views

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9. This was said in 1876.

the advance of Russia in Asia with deep misgivings." These remarks of Lord Beaconsfield indicate with prescient sagacity that the simplest, safest, and cheapest way of solving the so-called Central Asian difficulty is by trusting to the natural defences of India as the best protection of that country. The war parties in England and Russia alike are equally a curse to the progress and prosperity of mankind. Aggression on the part of Russia into India would be as suicidal in her case as the aggression on the part of England towards Herat would infallibly result in the destruction of any army despatched thither. War, of course, may result from the folly and wickedness of the rulers of either country, but the invasion of India by Russia appears to me one of the most improbable of contingencies. In any case our surest safeguard is the existence of a federated and contented nation to which the largest concession of political rights has been accorded and the amplest justice rendered. Russia would be as powerless against a united India as Europe has shown itself to be against China. Professor Seeley has shown that in the proper sense of the word India was never conquered by England. The people of India never united to oppose the English. Whenever one Indian state has been overthrown, it has almost invariably been with the help of some other Indian state. There was no Indian nation, and there has therefore been no real English conquest of India. No foreign Power could conquer India if she were a true nation. The present form of British administration cannot survive the fulfilment of those national tendencies which we have ourselves brought into existence. But India is bound to England as England is to India. The future of India will be a federation of independent states cemented together by the authority of England. India so constituted will afford from its own resources the most powerful check against aggression for all time. The close connection of England with India, the attitude of the foster-mother country under the proposed colonial relations, and of the free cities, which must always be English in tone and spirit, will not only tend to prevent a short-sighted jealousy, but will materially strengthen the United States of India in presenting an unbroken front of opposition to a common foe.

In any case it may be argued that it would not be difficult for England on the withdrawal of her own standing army to secure treaty rights for India from the European Powers. Such rights would be the easier to negotiate for if it were seen that England were honestly giving up its policy of self-aggrandisement. The evidence of honesty of purpose so recognised would inexpressibly benefit the cause of peace and future progress.

## POLITICAL LIFE INDIA\*

The Indian political situation confronts the people of that country with new conditions, gravely disturbing the superficial tranquillity of the ancient order of their life. To the government of this country it presents a series of severely practical and immensely difficult problems which call imperatively for solution. In the treatment of these public opinion will count for much, and this book is an attempt to assist it by making some appraisal of the forces which have created the present situation, since only through knowledge of the development of a country's political consciousness can it be seen how and why ideas have come to be continuously translated into the organized action which we call practical politics or the political situation.

The title of this introductory chapter itself suggests a preliminary question. We know that India was the home of a peculiarly noteworthy and splendid civilization centuries before the beginning of the Christian era. At least from the days of the great king Asoka, until the anarchy of the eighteenth century and the rise in India of the British power, there were monarchs ruling over greater or lesser areas of modern India whose courts were the centre of brilliant life, and sometimes of a learning and culture challenging comparison with any of their contemporaries. Did all the centuries which lie between the wonderful flowering of the Maurya civilization twenty-two hundred and more years ago, and the

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\*From Lord Irwin : "The Evolution of Political Life in India" in Sir John Cumming : *Political India, 1832-1932*, Chapter 1, pp. 1-21.

first beginnings of her modern political life in the mid-nineteenth century, produce in India no effective instrument for the transmission of its influence, its experience, and its institutions? To this question the reader who cares to pursue the matter in the literature of Indian polemics will find many and varied answers, and before we can give any reply to it here we must define our terms and be certain what we mean by political life.

For the purpose of this book, these two words can have only the meaning that they have for us here in England. They must denote a range of activities of mind and body constantly devoted to the creation, development, and protection of nationality, through a corporate form of self-government, which, because of India's membership of the British Empire, will naturally tend to be of the parliamentary type, though by no means inevitably exactly of the same pattern as our own. If this be our definition, we shall see that our inquiry is concerned with the events and consequences of the past few decades rather than of centuries and millenniums. Wherever indeed men live together under any form of ordered government, there must of course be found some kind of political life. In the kingdoms of the Euphrates valley, for example, four thousand years and more ago, as in India throughout her history before the coming of the British, there was political life, frequently fertile and vigorous, but widely removed both in purpose and achievement from that which we are here concerned to discuss. For India from the beginning of recorded history, and before it, until the eighteenth century, there was no continuity of development in political institutions or in national life. Country and people moved from one violent breach with the past to another. Indian history proceeded in a series of cataclysms, each of which seemed to render still more remote any prospect of attainment by India of conditions requisite for the emergence of true nationality. As far back as we can penetrate into Indian annals we meet those deep divisions between the several elements of the vast population within her borders,

which still persist to constitute the most formidable obstacle to the fulfilment of Indian nationalist hopes. Even in the north, where it was at one time customary to think that the Aryans extirpated their predecessors and lived as a racially uniform people before the coming of the Muslims, there was in truth no such uniformity. Wave after wave of invaders—Medes, Persians, Bactrians, White Huns, Scythians, and others—came through the northern and north-western gates of India, bringing with them new influences, importing fresh ideas and unfamiliar institutions, and often destroying much of what had been built before them. Between the eighth and the eighteenth centuries, from the Arab invasions of Sind to Nadir Shah the Persian, the political life and fabric of all India, except the south, was repeatedly dislocated by successive Muslim invasions. So catastrophic an experience gave scant scope for continuity of development; and India had small chance to evolve into a nation when perennial incursions were pouring into her borders such heterogeneous racial elements. Even the most mechanical of all the outward signs of nationality was denied to her. She was never, as a whole, subjected to one rule. Nor is she in the complete sense so subject even to-day, although the suzerainty of the Crown over the Indian States and the maintenance inviolate of the *pax Britannica*, from one end of India to the other, gives her in effect the real, if not the formal, substance of this particular attribute of nationality. But in no sense did India as a whole feel this unifying influence before the coming of the British.

The consequence of this to her subsequent development was far reaching, for the reason that some conscious apprehension of the idea of nationality is indispensable to political growth. Nationality may be difficult of precise analysis, and a mere catalogue of its formal attributes would not take us very far. But there is no mistaking its effects. For its nature is dynamic, so that nationality is to a people what personality is to the individual, and to be a nation men and women must be capable of thinking and acting as a unit in all that matters most. In the last resort, they must be prepared



to sink all differences of class, religion, and material interest for the sake of the common good. They must share the tradition of great deeds done in the past, and the present inspiration of common purpose. Thus nationality is a state, depending upon the spiritual power inherent in it to beget the conditions in which real politics can thrive ; and so it follows in India, as elsewhere, that the emergence of something fairly to be described as national feeling is a prime necessity for the establishment of true political life. Only then can political life take shape in all its many forms, corresponding to the constituent parts of the national society and reflecting all their variety of origin and experience.

It is instructive in this connexion to study two of the most famous achievements of English Victorian scholarship ; Sir Henry Maine's *Ancient Law* and Bishop Stubbs's *Constitutional History of England*. The latter begins with true Victorian thoroughness in the forests of Germany and traces the gradual unfolding of the primitive institutions of our forefathers who made the England which William conquered, into the parliamentary government which our country knew on the eve of the modern age. Nowhere is there any violent break with or submergence of the past. The Normans only gave strength and elegance, scope and direction to the ruder organs of law and government which had served their Saxon predecessors. And if we continue the history from the point where Stubbs left it, we find the same process still in operation. All is evolution and adjustment to new needs and new conditions. The great Civil War itself was fought to ensure, and in the event did no more than ensure, that this process should be allowed to continue without interruption. From the meeting of uncivilized warriors under the oak trees to the world constitution of the Statute of Westminster is a long journey, but the road is continuous and the stages well marked.

Contrast with this the case of India where, to carry on our metaphor of the road, the bridges were never built, and

the road itself was completely swept away from time to time by the torrents from the hills. Sir Henry Maine shows early India in possession of certain archaic Aryan institutions, similar, because akin—in the literal sense of the word—to our own primeval instruments of government. Who can doubt that, given the right conditions, these also might have grown into something rich and powerful, with the stamp of India and the Indian character on them? But this was not to be, and we may well ask how it would have fared with England if the natural forces at work had not been able to exert their unifying-influence, and instead of the different invading races fusing into one homogeneous people, some had remained alongside others, jealously retaining their own integrity, in the separation of distinct tradition and discordant interest. In such circumstances, England herself might well have remained in the state of heptarchy until brought to an artificial unity by some outside power, and then held, through years, suspended in her development, awaiting liberation of the forces ultimately making for effective unity. Yet that is exactly what has happened in India, and all that has survived of the rich promise of the first Aryan political genius are the little village councils in some parts of India, the arrested germs as it were of parliaments which might have been, and now the object of scientific study, much as atrophied organs in the human body, which once were vital parts in the structure of ancestors very different from ourselves, to-day engage the attention of physiologists.

It is necessary to appreciate this background to the growth of political life in India, because otherwise there is danger that our thought, being based on faulty premises, will be directed towards wrong objectives. Much of the current controversy in both India and this country assumes that recent political developments in India represent a violent break with India's past, an unnatural turning away from what is Indian, and from what is therefore more appropriate to Indian conditions and circumstances. If this were true, it would be a matter for anxious heart-searching on the part of all concerned, because

then there would be an alternative to the purely British institutions and form of government which have been during recent years in process of establishment in India. Moreover, the alternative would be something home grown and acclimatized to the soil. But, since it is not true, the sooner the unreal alternative is dismissed, the more speedily and effectively will the way be open to the recognition of the real forces now governing the political life of India, and the easier will it be to guide these into constructive channels where they may produce their legitimate effects.

It is none the less natural that there should be many persons in this country who feel grave doubt whether any form of government, other than autocratic rule, will eventually prove suitable for India, and who accordingly evince profound anxiety over the present attempt to develop for India parliamentary or quasi-parliamentary institutions. These doubts deserve respect, but they must be weighed against the other courses that conceivably lie open. I venture to quote some words I used in the inaugural Massey Lecture on the Indian problem which I delivered in Toronto a short time ago. Discussing the practical alternatives before the British rulers of India, I said :

'The very foundation of what we seek to do by way of training India to the practice of democratic institutions is condemned by some as alien to the temperament of the East. It is true that democracy, or an approach to it, involves in India delicate questions of franchise of quite peculiar difficulty, and rests ultimately upon a postulate of the value of personality which is largely exotic to Indian thought. But apart from the dominant influence exercised by the general example of constitutional development throughout the rest of the Empire, it is hard to see how Great Britain can evade the necessity of seeking a solution for India on lines not dissimilar.

'For what are the practicable alternatives ? The Government of India might continue to be controlled as at present by Great

Britain. Or, failing this, we might devise some form of government by an Indian autocracy or oligarchy. The first would be the avowal of failure and would imply abandonment of all hope of basing the future government of India upon Indian consent. The second could, for very adequate reasons, stand no chance of acceptance by either the British or the Indian peoples. It is opposed alike to the spirit of the times and to the whole practical history of India as we ourselves have made it. Whatever therefore the difficulties in the path of the development of democratic government in India—and they are as formidable as they well can be—there is no escape from them.'

There is one other aspect of the subject which bears upon the present situation and deserves passing notice. For various reasons, as we have seen, the gradual organic process by which political institutions have been moulded in other lands has had small place in Indian history. The consequence has been that such institutions as India has to day have been imported, almost entirely, from outside and, further, that these institutions, the principles on which they based, and the ideas with which they are associated, have been imported into India when their development was already far advanced. It was inevitable therefore that their introduction into the virgin soil of India should produce reactions of a quality and strength vastly different from, and vastly greater than, those which would have been experienced from a slower and more natural growth. Here is a factor in the development of political life in India which must always be borne in mind for the light it throws upon many of the phenomena familiar in Indian politics. In one sense it may truly be said that the whole of India's political life rests to-day on a precarious basis. It is still, so to speak, in India but not of India. Before the Indian peoples now is the vital work of assimilating this development, of making the principles and ideas on which it is based their own, of giving its institutions and organs a specifically Indian form, of fashioning them to fit Indian conditions and ways of thought,

and, above all, Indian character. We can no more give India a ready-made constitution than a mid-wife can give a woman a grown-up child of her own body. Every country must perfect the spirit of its own constitution out of its own being and traditions. No matter what the British have done in the past, or may do in the future, to foster the growth of institutions and reforms in India, these without the creative contribution that India alone can supply will remain no more than adhesions on the great trunk of India's life. Their sap will not blend with hers, as blend it must, if the fruit borne is to be for the true healing of India's ills.

In the peculiar position of India, therefore, the future depends jointly upon her own people and the people of this country. It is essentially a task that must enlist the best energies of both in combination, or to use a better word in spite of its present-day controversial associations, in co-operation with each other. It is within the power of this country to introduce into the government of India the basic principles of national self-government, but it is for India to apply them to her own circumstances and gradually to convert them into a true reflection of herself.

In the later chapters of this book, both the history and the necessity of this dual effort will be amply illustrated, and for the reader who holds the key to its genesis and the conditions of its performance there is an infinite amount of informing experience to be studied. It is too commonly believed that the rule of the old East India Company was a mere commercial exploitation, and that the test of good administration and good government in those days was simply whether or not the result was financially profitable. Such a nation has little regard for history ; for it is not difficult to show the extent to which the moral and material foundations of India's modern political life were firmly laid during the Company's regime. Exploitation no doubt there was, but its effects were transitory in comparison with the influence of another circumstance, which was the fact of India's membership of the British Empire.

Students here and abroad are now beginning to appreciate the importance of this association, and to recognize through the last century and a half the operation of certain springs of political life which permeate all parts of the Empire, and in which each shares according to the measure of its capacity to benefit from them.

The march of political progress throughout the Empire has been at varying pace but constantly in the same direction. From subordination to the Parliament of Great Britain it has led to that form of free association which we now call Dominion status. This term implies full autonomy and national status based on political forms which in their essence are those of British parliamentary government. The structure may vary ; Great Britain is a unitary government, Canada and Australia are federations. Nevertheless, the British party system and cabinet government are the tap-root of the political life in these giant daughters of the mother country. And if the true beginnings of England's own modern political life are to be found in the revulsion against George III's attempt to govern as well as rule, the American Revolution may be held to be the first thunderclap of a far reaching storm which was to sweep away much more than Lord North's ill-starred colonial policy. There was a great ferment of opinion in England, old and new, in those days ; and it was no mere chance which laid the first foundations of political reform in India in those last three decades of the eighteenth century. For the Regulating Act of 1773 all but coincided in time with the affair at Lexington. That Act was passed within twenty years of Clive's consolidation of the Company's position at Plassey, and ten years later, Pitt's India Act brought Indian affairs definitely within the purview of Parliament. The decennial inquiries which preceded the renewal of the East India Company's Charter threw much-needed light on Indian affairs and, besides bringing steady improvement into Indian administration, led to the formal enunciation of the most fruitful of all political principles, namely, the equality of all individuals before the law. Lastly, it is right to recall that it was during the Company's regime that Macaulay

penned his minute on Indian education, the effects of which on the course of Indian political development have been incalculable. And thus we may justly claim for the old East India Company that even in those far-off days when a united India, still more a united self-governing India, could have been hardly more than the merest fantasy, its administration unconsciously laid foundations from which the modern constitutional life of India has grown.

For many years indeed after the Government of India passed from the Company to the Crown it is not easy to detect any essential difference in the actual character of the government of the country. It remained an autocracy, but an autocracy continually tempered by the introduction of institutions and principles of very different kind. Thus, almost immediately after the assumption of government by the Crown after the Mutiny, the first Indian Councils Act was passed to give Indians representation in their own government ; and a generation later, in 1892, the Act was widened in order to give Indians a voice in choosing of whom that representation should consist. Between 1861 and 1892 is a long gap, but it was not wholly barren of constitutional achievement. Inside the Government of India itself various reforms and improvements were in progress, particularly in the direction of the devolution of greater administrative powers to the provinces, thus liberating the element of local patriotism and spontaneous interest felt by men concerning those things which touch them most nearly in their daily lives. There is in fact visible throughout the last half of the nineteenth century a steadily growing political consciousness and concern as regards political matters inside provinces, which historians of India not infrequently overlook. Constitutional development in India is too often visualized as something superimposed upon the provinces and their people from above. But the long story of the relations between centre and provinces in India, certainly from Lord Mayo's time down to 1917, is useful in correcting so one-sided a perspective ; and to-day it is probably true to say that the most vital political forces in India are in the provinces. Since

the inauguration of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms in 1921, the provincial legislatures have been responsible for the administration of such important departments of government as education, local self-government, industrial development, medicine, and public health. This responsibility has been exercised through Ministers dismissable at the will of the legislatures, and in consequence the latter have become increasingly the arena in which many of the ablest and most practical Indian politicians have sought their career. By the nature of their work the provincial legislatures have been nearer to the electorate than the distant Indian central legislature, and have had a correspondingly greater influence on the political education of the Indian voter.

As the nineteenth century advanced, the pace of political development in India began to quicken. We have seen that over thirty years elapsed between the two Indian Councils Acts, but only about half that space of time was to elapse before another of the great milestones in India's political progress was to be reached with the Morley-Minto reforms. True, these introduced no new principles into the Government of India, but they greatly extended the working of those already in operation, and they gave, both at the centre and in the provinces, legislative bodies whose natures and powers may properly permit them to be considered the forerunners of the later more democratic legislatures.

The introduction of these dynamic principles and institutions into the Government of India is therefore closely linked with the general growth of responsible self-government throughout the Empire, not only in Great Britain herself, but in those other members of the Imperial society which we call Dominions. And the historian can show how every great step forward here and in the Dominions has been accompanied at a greater or lesser interval by a corresponding advance in India. The Charter Act of 1833 was the fruit of the first reformed Parliament of England. Lord Durham's epoch-making report, worthily implemented by his son-in-law, Lord Elgin, had made responsible self-government in Canada a



reality in 1848. During the next ten or twelve years the same form of government was extended to all the major British colonies except one or two whose material development was not sufficiently advanced to enable them to receive it. And by 1861 these changes produced their effect, as we have seen, in India, where Lord Elgin, after the termination of his Canadian service, was now Viceroy. During the 'sixties, 'seventies, and 'eighties in England, the slow battle for the enfranchisement of the working classes in town and country was being fought and won, and Mr. Gladstone inaugurated his campaign for Home Rule in Ireland. Once more we see these stirrings of life in England reflected in the shape of the Indian Councils Bill of 1892. And lastly, the Morley-Minto reforms was the work of the Parliament that extended responsible self-government to the erstwhile Boer Republics of the Transvaal and Orange Free State.

None of these connexions are accidental. They are evidence of a common law of political progress for all parts of the British Empire, a law which operates generally and impartially in each instance as circumstances dictate and justify. In India we have not hesitated to apply the principle of responsible self-government as she has become ready to accept its obligations. As late as 1909, Lord Morley could say that the reforms which bear his and Lord Minto's names were in no wise meant to be the first step to responsibility in the Government of India. Yet, within ten years, the War, and India's share in it, had wrought so great a change both upon her circumstances and upon public opinion outside India that Mr. Montagu's famous declaration on behalf of the Imperial Government of that day formally made responsible self-government for India within the Empire a goal of British purpose. Nor is it without significance, as illustrating the rapidity with which thought has moved from the ancient moorings, that in the elaborate building plans for the new capital of India at Delhi, prepared in the years immediately before the War, it should have been deemed unnecessary to provide any separate building for a central legislative body.

Meanwhile the spirit of change had been working upon many other sides of Indian life. Throughout the length and breadth of the great sub-continent, as between India and the farthest parts of the earth, great systems of communications had been devised, creating a single geographic and economic entity, closely connected with the life of the great world without. Within half a century, from an insignificant position in the world's economic life India rose to that of fifth or sixth among the trading nations. Not less prodigious than the growth of communications was the spread of education, particularly of British education, and just as railways, telegraphs, and roads united the four quarters of India in the material sense, so the spread of western knowledge was to give the political classes of India a common intellectual meeting-place. The people of India now found themselves not only able to move from one end to the other of their country with ease and safety, but, what was far more significant, they found themselves able to share all the new movements of thought by which they were surrounded through the medium of a common language. And English is peculiarly the language of modern politics and modern freedom ; for England is the mother of free government and free institutions. Indians found themselves able to drink the waters of freedom from their fountain head, and the same language, which enabled them to do this, naturally served for the exchange of ideas, aspirations, and hopes ; and for the expression of these not only to each other, and not only to their rulers, but to the world at large. The introduction by this means of India and of Indian affairs on to the world stage has been perhaps one of the most potent influences in transforming the conditions which made possible British rule in India on the old autocratic lines.

When Warren Hastings, the first and perhaps the greatest of the Governors-General, was leaving India in 1786, he reviewed the state of Bengal under his rule and was able to say with truth, 'I have at least had the happiness to see one portion of the British dominion in India rise from the lowest state of degradation...enjoying the blessings of peace and

internal security...' And he was only one, if the most distinguished, of a long line of British administrators, who gave themselves ungrudgingly to secure the moral and material welfare of those committed to their charge. The monumental minutes which they wrote on education, and on judicial, police, or general administrative reform are taken from the shelf to-day only by curious students of the past. But when they were written they represented live thought and policy, and their results survive in much of the modern administrative system. And, all the while, their authors were preparing for what was to come after, and for their share in which they are surely entitled to posthumous recognition. Sir William Marris, than whom few may speak on this subject with greater authority and knowledge, has not without justification prophesied a verdict by history that 'it cannot have been a bad autocracy which stimulated by precept and example those stirrings of spirit which confront us in India to-day'.<sup>1</sup>

Such in brief outline has been the contribution of the British people on their side of the co-operative task to which allusion was made at the outset of this chapter. What of the other, that which was to be contributed by the people of India? We should not fall into the common error of expecting too great or enthusiastic a response from the people of India to the developments and changes we have been discussing. All but a small proportion of them live on the soil, the great majority in tiny, remote, and for ages unprogressive villages, uneducated, and almost totally immersed in a grim struggle for the basic necessities of existence. They must always have been more concerned with the immediate interests and duties of daily life than with political matters outside their comprehension. The formation of the Indian National Congress in the middle 'eighties may be regarded as the most tangible evidence of the beginning of political life in India from the side of the Indians themselves. But even this owed its inception very largely to the energy and enthusiasm of a few

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1. *Modern India* (1931), p. 63.

Englishmen, of whom the most outstanding were Hume, Wedderburn, and Yule, and like all things of its kind it was the outcome of a preceding period of preparation. The famous controversy over the Ilbert Bill during Lord Ripon's viceroyalty was the concrete event which brought the Indian National Congress to birth. But it is obvious that the Ilbert Bill, proposing to reform the judicial procedure affecting the trial of Europeans, did not spring into being fully fledged. Clearly it must have been the outcome of a developing opinion in India among Indians, recognized by a reforming statesman like Lord Ripon. And, as a matter of fact, we can see this development in progress before 1880. One of the most interesting by-paths in the history of British India is the study of the evolution of the press, and particularly that portion of it which was Indian owned. At first the latter devoted by far the greater part of its attention to religious topics, but from 1860 onwards there is a steadily growing interest in politics. During the late 1870's this development flared up suddenly into an anti-government propaganda of a strangely modern type, requiring resort by the Government to exceptional press legislation. The second Afghan War, for example, was the occasion for very outspoken criticism of the British Government, particularly in Bengal, and this in itself marked the end of the period when Indians acquiesced without question in the doings of their hitherto omnipotent rulers. Thus well before the end of last century the leaven of political discontent, which is the reverse side of political aspiration, was at work; and it was this spirit which was increasingly to find utterance in the Indian National Congress. The history of Congress can be studied in the pages which follow, and here it is only relevant to point out how curiously this now world-famous and unquestionably powerful body, typifying the opposition of nationalist India to the present system of government, is the outcome of co-operation between British and Indians. Modelled upon the thought and example of the West, its whole organization and spirit are western, and the aims which it professes are those of western politics.

But though a good deal of the history of political life in India is bound up with the history of the Indian National Congress, Congress claims too much if it would arrogate to itself the whole of that history, for from its earliest days it has been mainly a Hindu body, and it has been therefore only natural that other communities should form their own organizations for both religious and political purposes. The stirrings of dry bones in India has caused other than purely political bodies to stand upright, and, as we now see to have been inevitable, political organization has largely adopted communal forms, leading to the formation of a number of bodies, purely communal in purpose and composition. The important thing about these various organizations is that, whatever else may be said about them, they are quite genuine productions of the political life in India, and themselves contribute very directly to its vitality and development. To a large extent they control and organize politics in India, that is, the politics of the central and provincial legislatures and of the various Indian groups or parties there represented. It is only since 1921, that is, since the inauguration of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, that such bodies as these have had a suitable platform for their activities ; and during the past decade they have grown in numbers, in strength, and in experience. To what extent can it be said that they have assimilated the spirit and the technique of the political system of England from which they are derived ? From one point of view it may fairly be argued that the spirit in which most of the organized political and quasi-political bodies in India have been conceived, and in which they now function, is not favourable to the development of a full political life in India. For in great part the forces which stir them are centrifugal. Their activities frequently tend to make rather for division than for union. But this is not to say that communal associations are necessarily evil. They are not. On the contrary, they are natural developments, and they can evoke and sustain an organized enthusiasm as at present at any rate no other bodies can. But if they are to be a strength, not a weakness to the India of the future, they must lift their eyes beyond the immediate community sympa-

thies and attachments that have so far been the main motive of their existence. And gradually, it must be hoped, the operation of responsibility in the political field will evoke the formation of true political parties, pledged to the promotion of real political programmes.

It is difficult to predict the lines on which such parties may emerge, and they will no doubt vary according to local circumstances in different parts of India. The Congress is at present hampered as regards becoming a political party in the generally accepted sense by the fact that hitherto its energies have been so largely directed to political agitation of a negative sort, and because it draws its support so predominantly from one community. While the desire for social betterment of the Indian masses is probably the strongest motive of action in the minds of Mr. Gandhi and many other of the Congress leaders, Congress can hardly as yet be said to have developed a practical programme that would stand the test of administrative responsibility. So far as any such programme has been attempted, it has been devised in crude terms, evidently chosen rather for their supposed propaganda value than for their practical merits as a serious contribution to political thought.

The old Indian Liberal party was an enlightened and far-sighted attempt to create a true political organization. In spite of the inclusion in its ranks of many of the most able men in Indian public life, it has up to the present failed to achieve any wide popular influence because its doctrines and inspirations ran counter to the inter-communal antagonisms, which must still be acknowledged the strongest force in Indian politics.

Its history suggests that the Justice party will perhaps be the first to develop into a true non-communal party. Confined for years to Madras, where it has proved itself able to win elections and ministerial power in straight fights with Congress, it now flourishes in Bombay and the Central Provinces. In all these three provinces—Madras, Bombay, and the

Central Provinces—the Justice party is powerful and is gaining strength. It stands midway between a true political party and a communal party, for it was founded at the beginning of this century to fight the cause of non-Brahmins in the Madras Presidency against the Brahmins, who then held a virtual monopoly of place and power. But it has never been exclusive, and the efforts of its present leaders are towards the inclusion of all who wish to join it on the basis of its present policy of social and economic reforms. Brahmins, Europeans, Muslims, Depressed Classes, and Anglo-Indians are already numbered among its supporters, but it is still partly a 'communal' party inside the Hindu community. It may nevertheless succeed to the mission of the old Liberal party, and its anti-Brahmin character gives it sufficient ground of appeal to the prevailing 'communal' spirit to invest it with a vigour which the more purely intellectual Liberal movement has lacked.

The work of all these political or quasi-political and communal bodies has already had an appreciable effect upon the general mind of India. The rules made under the Government of India Act of 1919 enfranchised millions of voters in every province ; and a multiplicity of elections for central, provincial, and local bodies during the past ten years has increasingly brought the electorate to understand something of the machinery and purpose of politics. The various non-co-operation or civil disobedience campaigns organized by Congress have had their effect in the country districts of many parts of India, and it is very much less true than a short time ago it might have been to say that the Indian peasant thinks only of religion and not at all of politics.

The economic conditions of post-war years have acted as an additional incentive to even the humblest in India no longer to accept without question the conditions under which he lives. Labour and the Depressed Classes are beginning to be organized, and their leaders are steadily working to turn the thoughts of urban and rural workers towards politics and the

part which they can play in them. And the past few years have seen women eager to take part in political activities.

It is very evident that India is waking from her old political apathy and that in some directions she has begun to develop for herself healthy political organisms. But she has also developed some that are dangerous and unwholesome, and the next years are going to see a keen struggle between these for mastery. It is the purpose of this book to enable those who read it to form some judgement of the outstanding factors in the problem which affect the present welfare of India, and on the wise handling of which her future position in the British Empire and the world will assuredly depend.



## THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS\*

### "CALL TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION"

Dear Sir,

We thank it desirable at the present time briefly to review the position of the Congress Movement and its future prospects. This seems necessary because we who were among its originators, have now well-nigh completed our work as pioneers : we have given the lead to the younger men, and must look to them to take up in larger measure the burden of the work. Also the present is a critical time for the movement a parting of two ways : as it will depend upon the attitude and action of the people : and of the Indian authorities, whether the constitutional movement of the educated classes shall develop into the full usefulness by drawing together the rulers and the ruled, and promoting the welfare of both India and this country : or whether the efforts that have been made shall end in disappointment and reaction. Our belief is that there is ground for hope, for signs are not wanting that the dire misfortunes which have overtaken India in the last few years have had the effects of dispelling some dangerous fallacies, and of uniting all classes in their efforts to meet common calamities.

2. From the point of view we cordially welcome the spirit of the declarations made by Lord George Hamilton at the close of his speech on the Indian Budget last July. While justly claiming credit for the perfected mechanism of the Indian official system he admitted that system was too centralized, and that in consequence the district officials were deprived of the power of initiative, and taken out of touch with the people. "We have", he said "passed from the old

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\*Manifesto issued from London on 19 October, 1900 by Sir William Wedderburn, A.O. Hume and Dadabhai Naoroji containing a review of the work of the Congress from 1885 to 1900.

patriarchal methods. The gentlemen who go out to India now are in a different position. Everybody has a Code for everything, and if the Code fails there is the telegraph by which we can get assistance at the earliest possible moment. But that is not the only evil from which Civil Servants in India suffer. They have everything that develops and the result is that they are so overburdened with correspondence, reports and returns that they are really imprisoned in their offices for the greater part of the day, and it is only when such a great calamity as that with which India is now afflicted occurs and sweeps away all their stereotyped procedure that these men are able to come out of their offices and join with the other forces at work in dealing with the trouble." Lord George then went on to acknowledge, regretfully, that, owing to this isolation of the European officials, our Government has not, in recent years, increased its popularity and that our measures have not all been palatable to the people. But he believed that now good will come out of evil seeing that the joint labour in the Famine districts has "rekindled between the Government and the governed that feeling" of regard and affection which was so marked a characteristic in India." As regards the future he expressed his hope "that the interchange of kindly feeling and mutual regard among all classes who have fought the common fight may be a lasting and increasing influence in guiding the future fortune of India."

3. The expression of these wise and humane sentiments by the Secretary of State on so important an occasion is a subject for sincere congratulations : and will tend materially to remove some of the principal obstacles in the way of successful Congress work. The fact noted by Lord G. Hamilton must be recognised that the old patriarchal relations, with their special bonds of union, have been a great measure dissolved. From many a point of view this change is to be regretted, but we must accept it as one of the signs of progress. It has been one result of higher education. But other results of this education are manifested in increased public spirit rectitude and independence. And these results we desire to utilize in order to create new bonds of union

adapted to the altered conditions. Much may be hoped for as regards cordial and fruitful cooperation between the rulers and the ruled if, on the one hand the authorities are sympathetic and forbearing : and if, on the other hand, the Congress workers do their part with zeal, tempered by sound wisdom and discretion.

4. Undoubtedly there have in the past been serious misunderstandings with regard to the object and methods of the Congress : difficulties have arisen in consequence ; and with a view to smoother working in future, it seems desirable frankly to state these difficulties, and show as far as possible how they have originated, and how they must be overcome. The Congress movement was as pointed out by late Sir W.W. Hunter, "the legitimate and inevitable result of Western education in India", and it represents the laudable aspirations of the educated classes to do their part in promoting the welfare of India, and aspecially in improving the economic condition of the masses. The educated classes recognise that British rule is a necessity. They know that under existing condition India can not stand alone, and the only other alternatives are Russian rule, or anarchy, either of which would be destructive of their best hopes. The fundamental principle, therefore, of the Congress is the maintenance of British rule : the object being to make it so conformable to the welfare and wishes of the people as to give it the strength and permanance of a national government. The originator of the Congress movement designed to attain this object by placing at the disposal of the Government the most mature experience of responsible Indian Public Opinion ; and for this purpose it was decided to hold an annual Congress, to which the members should be freely elected from all parts of India. The scheme took shape in 1885, when the first Congress met in Bombay, and since then at each year a Congress has been held in some important centre, and after full debate resolutions bearing on the welfare of the people have been passed and duly transmitted to the Government. All the proceedings have been open and public, and by thus providing a constitutional channel for bringing popular

grievances before the Government. The Congress seeks to remove the tendency to underground discontent and secret conspiracy which is a danger necessarily attending an administration conducted by foreigners on autocratic lines.

5. Such being the purpose and work of the Congress, we claim that the movement deserves to be welcomed and fostered by the Government, as doing good and unselfish service to the State. Unfortunately this has always been the policy pursued : on the contrary, the official attitude towards the Congress has often been one of disapproval and suspicion. We quite realise the difficulty of the situation. It is evident that free discussion of grievances cannot be carried on without criticism of official acts, and it is not unnatural that such criticism should be resented : so that unless allowances are made by the authorities, strained relations must result. But we are confident that if a feeling of antagonism has existed it has been sought, or desired by the Congress on the contrary the desire of the Government, as the only way of obtaining the reforms prayed for. As all the power rests with the Government, any other policy would have been suicidal. Accordingly the first idea of the Congress leaders was to pray the Government to allow a high local official to preside over their deliberations ; and for this purpose, when the first Congress was being organised, the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, was approached, with a view to the meeting being held under the Presidency of Lord Reay, then Governor of Bombay, Lord Dufferin approved the proposal as showing the desire of the Congress to work in complete harmony with the authorities, but he pointed out that many difficulties would be involved if a high official presided over such an assembly. The idea was, therefore, abandoned, but none the less the first Congress was opened with the friendly sympathy of the highest authorities. At the second Congress Lord Dufferin showed his sympathy by inviting the members of the Congress, as distinguished visitors to Calcutta, to a garden party at Government House. And a similar compliment was paid to them by Lord Connemara, the Governor of Madras, in the following years. But the most important incident

affecting the position of the Congress took place in December, 1890, when the meeting was again held at Calcutta, during the Viceroyalty of Lord Lansdowne. On that occasion some doubt had arisen regarding the orders of the Government as to officials attending the meeting of Congress and Lord Lansdowne having been appealed to give a clear expression of his wishes on the subject. His introductions are contained in a letter addressed to the General Secretary of the Congress. After declaring that the Congress was one of those movements which the Government of India regarded as "perfectly legitimate in themselves, and which private persons are free to promote", the latter went on as follows: "The Government of India recognise that the Congress movement is regarded as representing in India what in Europe would be called the more advanced Liberal party, as distinguished from the great body of Conservative opinion which exists side by side with it. They desire themselves to maintain an attitude of neutrality in their relations with both parties so long as these act strictly within constitutional limits. They intend that all Government servants shall preserve a similar attitude of neutrality, and shall abstain from active participation in political or quasi-political movements of all kinds; and also from putting pressure upon others in order to induce them to take part, or not to take part, in any movement which is legitimate in itself."

6. It is to be regretted that the equitable and judicious rule of neutrality laid down by Lord Lansdowne, has not always since then governed the actions of all our Indian officers, and that, in not a few localities, people have come to believe that they suffer more or less for belonging to the Congress, and even come under official disfavour because they are known to be subscribers to, or constant readers of, the journal INDIA, which seeks to set forth the Indian view of affairs.

7. We need not go into any particulars on this point, as we hope and trust that by-gones will now be by-gones. But it has been necessary to refer to these strained relations in

order to consider what can be done to remove any antagonism which may exist between official feeling on the one hand, and the Congress, as representing independent public sentiment, on the other.

8. Let us consider what is the shortcoming alleged against the Congress. Our opponents object that it is not fully representative of the Indian people. We are quite willing to admit this. At the same time we claim that it represents a very important body of public opinion. If certain classes themselves aloof, whether from timidity, indifference, or hostility to the movement, that is not our fault. For the Congress recognises no distinctions of class, race, or religion ; and gladly welcomes all who will unite to work for the common good. Neither in India, nor elsewhere, it is practicable to obtain complete national representation, but our desire is to make our system as perfect as possible : and no doubt the Congress might become more fully representative if the local officers of Government gave the more timid and backward classes to understand that the "Sirkar" is not averse to their participating in the movement. Again, the opponents of the Congress allege that its views are extreme, and the reforms prayed for reasonable. Such allegations are vague, and cannot, we believe, be substantiated by reference to the resolutions passed year by year in the Congress. But would it be surprising, if the prayer for redress of grievances becomes urgent, and even vehement, when we consider the sufferings of the Indian people, and remember that they have patiently renewed their prayer from year to year since 1885 ? The Indian people are very patient, and expect but little. But would it not be a wise and kindly act of the Government of India to take into consideration each year the representations of the Congress, and give a reply, as in the case of memorials from local associations, stating generally the views of the Government of the various reforms proposed ? Such treatment of the Congress proposals would give the widest satisfaction, and would at the same time draw all the best intellect and experience of the country for the consideration and solution of

the difficult economic problems by which the Government of India is surrounded ?

9. In response to Lord G. Hamilton's sympathetic expressions we offer these suggestions as to the best means of removing antagonism and bringing British officials into friendly touch with popular sentiment in India. No one doubts the desire of these officials to exercise their authority for the ultimate good of the people, but as foreigners it is difficult for them to learn the real facts, especially those of a disagreeable kind. Being "imprisoned in their offices for the greater part of the day", they have little opportunity for that frequent and familiar intercourse with all classes of the population, which was the strong point of the older school of administrator. Hence the officers of Government are dependent for their information upon the reports of their subordinates, many of whom are inadequately paid, and belong to a class whose interests are not identical with those of the peasant, the trader and the professional men. And the result is a very wide divergence of opinion between the European official and the Indian public, regarding some of the most important current events. We do not claim that the latter are always in the right. But it is a good proverb which says that no one knows where the shoe pinches but the wearer. And however skilful the maker of the shoe may be, it is important that he should know where the pinch makes itself felt, even in the remedy proposed by the wearer may not, for the moment, appear to him practicable, or even desirable.

10. We know much as regards the action and attitude of the authorities towards the Congress. We will now add a few words addressed to the Congress workers and the Indian public. Let them not be weary in well doing : we know well the difficulties of their position, and the sacrifices involved. But when we consider the objects of the Congress, and the extent to which those objects have (under very arduous circumstances) been fulfilled, we feel that there are many grounds for satisfaction and encouragement. What are our objects (a) in India, and (b) in England ? (a) Taking as our basis the main-

tenance of British rule, our object in India has been to obtain solidarity of public opinion, founded upon the widest experience and the widest counsels available under existing conditions. This part of our work has been in great measure accomplished. The Congress programme, stated in the form of definite resolutions upon the questions of the day, has been gradually matured during the last fifteen years, and has practically been accepted as expressing independent public opinion throughout India. We doubt much adverse criticism has been brought to bear upon Congress aims and methods, but we are to be erroneous in fact or, from the Indian point of view, unreasonable in purpose. Moreover, those who attack the Congress cannot point to any body of organised opinion which can in any way compete with that represented by the Congress : nor have they shown how the machinery or structure of the Congress might be amended, so as to make it more widely representative. We may, therefore, claim that the Congress holds the field as a national representative assembly, and that, as regards solidarity of public opinion, its object in India has practically been attained.

11. (b) As regards England much heavier task lies before the Congress ; but the work must be done, for here is the seat of power. When we consider the vast and varied home, foreign, land colonial interests of the British Empire, the difficulty of obtaining and retaining attention to Indian affairs will be realised. But much has been accomplished of a practical kind. The object of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress has been to place the Indian view of Indian affairs before the British public, by means of Parliament, the Press, and the Platform : and in all these directions the results have been substantial and encouraging. In the House of Commons an Indian Parliamentary Committee has been formed, including about 120 members, pledged to "give their attention to Indian affairs, and to see justice done." Then as regards the Press "India" has been established as a first-class weekly journal, forming store-house of facts and arguments for journalists and speakers throughout the country, and keeping before the British public the Indian view of current



events. Again, the platform has been utilised as far as means permitted, by Indian and British speakers, who have explained to sympathetic audiences the needs of India, and the means by which she may be made prosperous and contented. The results of this active campaign in Parliament and the country have been very gratifying, and we find that on the most important questions affecting India. The Congress view has in each case prevailed, however vehemently it may have been at first assailed. Among the most striking recent instances are the forward policy beyond the North-West frontiers, the plague regulations : the famine grant, and the financial relations of India to England. In each of these cases the initiative was taken by the British Committee of Indian National Congress, and the Indian Parliamentary Committee, and carried through with (in some instances) little or no support from other quarters. Through Parliament, in the Press, and on the platform, the Indian view was urged openly and persistently under circumstances of exceptional difficulty and discouragement. The result has been that, as regards the North-West frontier, the Conservative policy of Lord Lawrence has been received back into favour ; while as regards the plague regulations the compulsory segregation, to which special objection was taken, has been abandoned. It may perhaps be said that these changes in the Government policy have resulted from the force of circumstances, and not from the urgency of the Congress party. But this contention would only show that the Indian view has in each case been supported by the force of circumstances, and that much loss and suffering would have been avoided if that view had been accepted at an earlier stage. Again as regards the financial relations of India to the British Empire, a question of vital economic importance, the appointment of a Royal Commission was obtained by the exertions of the Indian Parliamentary Committee, led by Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji ; during the five years for which the Royal Commission lasted, the Indian view was laboriously kept to the front by the minority on the Commission which represented Congress views ; the Indian view has now received public and official recognition in the Minority Report ; to the extent of 1/4 million

sterling per annum the Commission has unanimously found the charges placed upon India to be unfair. Thanks, the Government has accepted this finding, thus conceding to India a first instalment of financial justice. As regards the demand for a famine grant for the Imperial Exchequer, it is true that this concession has not yet been accorded. But, looking to support given to claims, in the House of Commons, by public opinion, and by the leading British journals, we may hope that in this particular case also the view of the Congress party will ultimately prevail. Further, we referred above (para 1) to certain dangerous fallacies which recent events have dispelled. Of these the most important are the official belief in the prosperous condition of the rayat and the distrust of Indian loyalty. These unfortunate misapprehensions have led to serious errors alike in legislation and in administrative acts. But in both of these matters the progress of events has brought about a change of opinion. The destitution of the rayat has been manifested by his inability to resist death by famine: while the loyalty of the Indian people has been demonstrated, beyond all cavil, by the ready and whole hearted support given to the British Empire at the most critical point in the affairs of South Africa and China.

12. In glancing at these questions of high imperial importance, we have no wish unduly to magnify the work of the British Committee, or to reflect on those who have honestly differed from us. But we think it is only justice to the Indian people to show how markedly, in these troublous times, their counsels and action have tended to the safety, honour and welfare of her Majesty and her dominions.

13. Reverting to the point from which we started we desire again to express our hope that the forecast of Lord G. Hamilton will come true, that good may come out of evil, and that after sufferings, bravely met by joint effort, a fresh bond of union may be formed between the rulers and ruled. The British are practical people, and have now had an opportunity of realising, from hard facts, the disadvantage of disregarding Indian opinion. There will always exist a difference between official and non-official opinion, a difference which arises from

looking at the same matters from two different points of view : the old story of the shield, silver on one side and gold on the other. But of all people in the world the Indians are naturally the most docile and submissive to authority ; and all they ask for is a fair hearing in order to promote the common good. Why then go on with this damaging conflict in Parliament, in the Press, and before the British public ? A CONCORDAT would be much better for all parties, and the olive branch now held out by the highest authority will, we believe, be gladly welcomed by the influential and educated classes throughout India. The opportunity seems in every way a good one under the present Viceroy, who by his energy, independence, and sympathy has won golden opinions from all. India is now lying prostrate from accumulated misfortunes. What is wanted is to bring all available facilities together, in order to raise her up, and lead her again into paths of prosperity. The first step in this direction is to ascertain by searching inquiry the causes of her downfall and to devise remedies suited to her varied and peculiar economic conditions. To initiate and direct this all important work we believe that Lord Curzon is pre-eminently fitted, and that if he will undertake it, a new and happier era may arise for India. Should these views meet with the approval of the Congress which is to assemble at Lahore next Christmas we would suggest that the question of the economic condition of India should take the foremost place in its deliberations, and that a resolution should be passed earnestly praying Lord Curzon to institute a full and independent enquiry. If such a resolution were sent to the Viceroy in Council with a carefully prepared and temperate statement, showing facts and proposed remedies, it would not, we believe, fail to receive the careful consideration of the Government. Looking to the varied conditions in different parts of India, and to the fact that the village is the economic unit, it appears to us that the best form for the enquiry would be a detailed village enquiry, conducted in selected typical villages in the different provinces which have suffered from famine. If means can be discovered to make these typical villages safe and pros-

perous, a clue will have been found to make safe land prosperous the many villages of which rural India consists.

14. As regards the work in England we have pointed out the striking success which has attended the labours of the British Committee. But the work in England is great and difficult, and the workers are few ; and these are overtaxed both as to physical endurance and financial resources. That is why one of us who now address you (Sir W. Wedderburn) has been driven to retire from Parliament. For seven years he has had a double burden direct-work for India ; together with the wear and tear of contested elections, care for the special interest of his constituents, and the multifarious duties of Parliamentary life. He has found it not possible to continue this double burden, and has therefore, with great reluctance, for the present retired from the House of Commons, in order to economise his resources for the direct work on behalf of India. This explanation seems necessary because it has been widely believed to be the advocacy of India's cause. This is not at all the case. He does not desire to lay down the Indian burden. He only asks friends in India so to lighten it that it may not be beyond his strength. If the personal and financial strain is removed, he may again seek to obtain a seat in the House of Commons, as it is there alone that the great questions on which the fate of India depends are ultimately decided.

15. In conclusion we repeat that the present time is a critical one. On the one hand, by hard earnest work, by showing knowledge, industry, good feeling, and a united purpose, the Congress may constitute itself a valued adviser to the Government of India, and an influence in England tending to strengthen the Empire, on the other hand, if the necessary sacrifice and self-denial are not exercised, if for want of courage and constancy the Indian people allow this constitutional effort to lapse, the work of years will be thrown away, and a danger will arise that the physical sufferings of the masses may lead to the counsels of despair. Against such a conclusion we, who have given our best years to the service of India, will do to the last use our best efforts, in the interest alike of India and of this country.

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